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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

LEARNING AND TEACHING GRAMMAR:
THE EXPERIENCES AND INTENTIONS OF STUDENT TEACHERS

BY

JILL KEDERSHA McCLAY

©

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled LEARNING AND TEACHING GRAMMAR: THE EXPERIENCES AND INTENTIONS OF STUDENT TEACHERS submitted by JILL KEDERSHA McCLAY in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

John E. Oster
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Date: 6 October 1988

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of secondary English education students regarding grammar learning and teaching, in order to gain insight into the probable future status of grammar instruction. Forty-four respondents completed a questionnaire in which they recalled and evaluated the grammar and writing instruction they received, described their grammar teaching as student teachers, and indicated their intentions for teaching grammar.

Ninety-one percent of respondents recalled formal grammar drills during their schooling. Their attitudes toward this method were generally negative. The 17 percent whose grammar instruction had been integrated with writing regarded that approach as more effective than the drill-and-exercise method.

Twenty-two respondents taught grammar as student teachers. Of these, 86 percent used the drill-and-exercise method primarily or exclusively. Their evaluations of these lessons were mixed, but even those who were satisfied noted students' negative attitudes toward grammar.

Seventy-four percent of respondents intended to integrate grammar with writing; 26 percent intended to teach some separate grammar lessons; 19 percent were uncertain of their intentions.

Respondents who had positive experiences learning grammar or who had taught grammar were more confident about teaching it. Respondents were nervous about grammar teaching regardless of their confidence about their writing abilities.

It was concluded that the degree of respondents' commitment to integrated grammar and writing instruction may be superficial. Their intentions regarding integration accorded with current thinking in English education. However, they had little experience to support these intentions. There was also a lack of understanding of current thought about the nature of grammar.

The prospects for secondary-school grammar instruction give cause for concern. Given most respondents' lack of exposure to an integrated language program, their uncertainty about the meaning of grammar, and their vaguely-stated intentions, their ability to implement effective integrated instruction is questionable. They seem more likely to perpetuate a negative cycle, transmitting their discomfort to their students.

Recommendations were to promote a broader understanding of grammar instruction among classroom teachers and the public, to encourage students to broaden their background in language study, and to incorporate experience with integrated writing instruction into English education programs.

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I was fortunate enough to have begun my postgraduate work with Dr. R. Glenn Martin before he retired. His continued interest in my progress has meant a great deal to me.

Finally, a public expression of thanks is due to my husband, Alec, who supported my efforts in every sense of the word and without whom this project would not have been completed.

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CHAPTER I

PURPOSE AND PLAN OF THE STUDY

A. Introduction

The controversy concerning the teaching and learning of grammar has become heated in the past thirty years, with researchers generally lining up against traditionalist teachers, parents, and, more recently, the so-called "back to basics" movement in education. Educational researchers have focused their attention upon the logic, "teachability," and "learnability" of traditional and transformational grammars, finding them lacking in all criteria. Dozens of experimental studies have uniformly failed to establish the value of teaching any formal grammatical system. Richard Braddock, in his now-famous declaration, startled many confirmed grammarians by asserting that "the teaching of formal grammar has a negligible or, because it usually displaces some instruction and practice in actual composition, even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing" (Braddock et. al., 1963, pp.37-38). However, other researchers have noted the flaws of the studies upon which Braddock and others based their claims, as the complex of variables known as "grammar teaching" cannot be adequately controlled in any experiment (Newkirk, 1978). Moreover, just as teachers and texts have commonly misused and abused grammar study, so have researchers tended to focus upon the misuses and abuses rather than on well-presented instruction. However, the consistency of their findings against formal grammar instruction is impressive, as are the results of many non-grammar-based writing programs which emphasize extensive experience and awareness of the processes of writing (Graves, 1983; Murray, 1980).

With the acceptance in English educational circles of these research findings, theorists have advocated that less classroom time be devoted to the formal presentation of grammar. Many English educators, however, acknowledge the necessity of some formal grammar instruction to facilitate discussion of points of language usage. They advise the classroom teacher to minimize this formal instruction, employing only the descriptive terminology necessary for the student's needs (Moffett and Wagner, 1983; Foster, 1983). This advice leaves the teacher to define the minimum instruction necessary for the students' needs.

The question of the teaching of formal traditional grammar has come into the consciousness of the general public, which has been quite definite if not very informed in its opinion. A consensus has formed among academics, business people, and the mass media that the writing skills of our high school and university graduates are declining. Parents usually want students to be taught the workings of the English language. The public outcry over the alleged decline in writing skills of university students in general and of education students in particular has led many certifying boards to require that prospective teachers achieve suitable scores on standardized tests and submit writing samples before they are granted certification to teach in elementary or secondary schools (Duke, 1985; Hodges and Nash, 1982).

Student teachers are also aware of the voices in academia and in society which call for a return to formal instruction in language structure. At the University of Alberta, for example, a writing competency examination has highlighted the poor performance of many students and has sparked a public debate on secondary school language arts education.

Secondary school classroom teachers, though middlepeople in this controversy, are perhaps in closer proximity to parents than to English education theorists. They are subject to the pressures that parents exert, but they may be quite isolated from the advice of theorists. Whether in response to pressure or to a belief in the value of formal traditional grammar, many classroom teachers have, by and large, continued to use the isolated drills and exercises of formal traditional grammar.

These conflicting messages present a dilemma to fledgling language arts teachers. They learn from recent research the futility of formal grammar instruction; they are advised in sometimes vague terms to teach "just enough." If, on one hand, these student teachers have graduated from secondary schools in which the research has been taken seriously, then they have not been exposed to much traditional grammar; hence, the student teachers may not have received sufficient grammar instruction to be capable of determining how much formal grammar instruction and terminology are "enough." If, on the other hand, they have been instructed to any extent in traditional grammar, they may have that experience locked into their minds as "the way it's done" and be reluctant to abandon that aspect of their experiential base in the classroom. At any rate, whatever their experience as students, they are aware of the public outcry for a return to educational "basics," a demand which most often includes an emphasis upon formal, traditional grammar instruction.

These conflicting messages confronting student teachers may be compounded when they begin their rounds of student teaching. At that time, they must attempt to satisfy the expectations of cooperating teachers and faculty consultants, who may hold strong and conflicting views on the teaching of grammar. They must also begin to gather together these contradictory ideas into a coherent teaching practice of their own.

B. Purpose

The purpose of this study was to survey language arts education students regarding their experiences of and beliefs about learning and teaching grammar in school writing programs and to discover how their attitudes were formed. As teachers' attitudes strongly affect their teaching, this study attempted to discover how these new language arts teachers intended to approach the teaching of grammar. The survey included questions concerning their assessments of their experiences both as grammar learners during their own schooling and as grammar teachers during their student teaching experiences, as well as their intentions for teaching grammar and writing as professional teachers. In surveying this group, the researcher also hoped to learn about their confidence in teaching this controversial component of the language arts course.

C. Research Questions

The questions asked in this study focused upon three aspects of the student teachers' perceptions and experiences of grammar and writing:

A. Reflections upon their pasts as learners of grammar,

B. Reflections upon their experiences as student teachers of grammar, and

C. Their intentions regarding the teaching of grammar and writing in their own classrooms.

Within these three broad areas, the study attempted to answer the following specific questions:

1. What educational and linguistic backgrounds do these student teachers bring to the teaching of language arts?

2. How do the student teachers define grammar? What do they consider to be the proper focus of grammatical instruction?

3. What memories do they have of grammar and writing instruction from their school days? Have these experiences influenced their beliefs about grammar instruction in the classroom, and if so, in what ways?

4. How do they assess the grammar and writing instruction they received during their school years?

5. What experiences have they already had in teaching grammar? How do they assess these experiences?

6. How do they intend to teach grammar in the future?

7. How confident do they feel about teaching grammar?

D. Plan

The plan of this study was to design a questionnaire and administer it to secondary language arts students in curriculum and instruction classes. The questionnaire included questions both of a qualitative and quantitative nature. Narrative sections of the questionnaire allowed the respondents to delve into their memories for personal experiences and impressions of their schooling and to explore and explain in an individual style their current beliefs and intentions. The quantifiable sections of the questionnaire allowed for some comparison of responses. Thus, both a broad and an in-depth perspective of the experiences and attitudes of this group of prospective language arts teachers was obtained.

1. Subjects

Two curriculum and instruction classes of secondary language arts student teachers, totalling forty-four, were surveyed. A survey questionnaire was administered to these student teachers, with the cooperation of their language arts curriculum and instruction professors, during the period between the junior and senior high school rounds of their Phase III student teaching in March, 1986.

The students who were included in this group were in third or fourth year of undergraduate studies or were in the after-degree program leading to the degree of Bachelor of Education. They had already completed four weeks of student teaching in their minor subject during a previous term and, two weeks prior to participating in this research project, had completed four weeks of student teaching in language arts at the junior high school level.

2. Collection of Data

The data-collecting instrument was a questionnaire which was distributed in the two curriculum and instruction classes. The purpose of the study was explained; questions from the student teachers regarding the nature of the research project were invited and answered; and the student teachers were assured that their participation was voluntary and that their anonymity would be safeguarded. They were then asked to respond to the questionnaire during class time. They took between 45 and 70 minutes to do so.

3. Reporting and Discussion of the Data

The responses to the questionnaire were grouped into the following broad categories:

a. background information,
b. definitions of grammar and grammar study,
c. recollections and assessments of experiences as learners of grammar,
d. discussion and assessments of experiences as student teachers of grammar (when applicable), and
e. intentions regarding the teaching of grammar in the future as professional teachers.

The data were then analyzed in an attempt to discover what connections, if any, existed among these categories. The questionnaire contained two types of data: narrative and quantitative, with the primary emphasis upon the former. It was designed to allow as much individuality of response as possible within the obvious constraints of this type of data collection instrument. Therefore, the discussion of the data will focus upon the patterns revealed in the narrative responses as well as upon a comparison of the more quantitative responses.

E. Delimitations

The major delimitation of this study was the selection of the term 2 Phase III language arts education students as the sample population. The respondents from these two classes comprised approximately two-thirds of the total number of Phase III language arts students in 1986. This selection was important and timely because these students were in their final phase of student life within the University of Alberta program in Secondary Education before they entered the teaching profession. At this point, they were at a crossroad in their experiences of grammar in that they were functioning both as students and as teachers. It was a fruitful time in their careers to reflect upon their past experiences, current teaching practice, and future intentions.

F. Limitations

The limitations of this study concern the relatively small sample population for the survey and the fact that this population were probably atypical secondary school English students. Those students who become language arts majors within the Education Faculty at university are presumably ones who excelled in language arts. As such, their recollections of their experiences in learning English grammar probably would not be representative of the general population of secondary students. However, as these are the people who will teach grammar in our secondary schools, their perceptions merit study.

A possible limitation of the study is that one's recollections are not always accurate. Respondents may not recall what actually occurred in their classrooms when they were students or student teachers. However, this need not be considered an undue limitation, as the perceptions that linger in our memories are the perceptions upon which we build our beliefs, attitudes, and future practices. Although the student teachers may not have completely accurate recall of their learning experiences, the memories that they have may be significant in their own teaching careers.

The time of data collection--near the respondents' completion of the teacher preparation program--may have been significant in terms of the attitudes and intentions of the respondents. The questionnaire was administered to students who were on the threshold of their professional careers. At that particular time, they may have been especially vulnerable to insecurity and anxiety about their competence as teachers.

G. Significance of the Study

Although the research on grammar instruction has been extensive and complex, it has focused upon experimental studies and upon controlling for many of the incredibly numerous and complex variables involved in grammar instruction. It has not focused upon the perceptions and attitudes of the teachers and students who teach and learn grammar. Such a focus might prove valuable. Certainly, a teacher's attitude influences his or her teaching methodology, and the success of the teaching is likely to be affected. An exploration of the attitudes of people who are both students and teachers of grammar may provide some suggestions for the structuring of teacher preparation programs for language arts majors and for in-service education.

H. Assumptions

The major assumption of this study is that one's experiences significantly affect one's beliefs and attitudes. A second and related assumption is that one's beliefs and attitudes significantly affect teaching style and methodology.

I. Definitions of Terms

The term "language arts education student" refers to those undergraduate or after-degree student who were registered in the professional term of the integrated program as secondary language arts majors during the January-April, 1986, term of the University of Alberta Education Faculty. The integrated program involves curriculum and instruction courses and a student teaching practicum.

In this study, the researcher uses the term "grammar" in reference to (a) the study of the classes of words, their inflections, and their functions and relations in the sentence; (b) a study of what is to be preferred and what avoided in inflection and syntax (as in Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary). However, as will be discussed in Chapter III, respondents' definitions of "grammar" varied considerably.

The designation of "formal" or "informal" in reference to grammar instuction will refer to the focus of the information concerning grammar. "Formal" grammar instruction involves attention to grammatical terminology as a means of abstract or de-contextual discussion about language. "Informal" grammar instruction involves a focus upon grammar in reference to and in the context of student compositions. Both types of grammatical instruction can be accomplished in individual, smallgroup, or full-class settings.

The term "traditional grammar" refers to the grammatical system which has historically been taught in English-language schools. Its nineteen descriptive elements, based upon a Latinate taxonomy, include both semantic and syntactic elements (Mittins, 1982). The term "traditional grammar" will here include modern traditional grammar, which has a slightly stronger emphasis upon word groups rather than upon single words. Instruction in traditional grammar commonly involves a certain amount of drill and exercise work from workbooks or textbooks.

The term "transformational grammar" refers to the system of grammar which applies the linguistic theories of Noam Chomsky. Transformational grammar focuses upon the generation of sentences. Basic sentence patterns, called kernel sentences, are combined and embedded to produce more complex sentence patterns (Thomas and Kintgen, 1974). The exercises in which students combine kernel sentences do not involve any formal transformational grammar instruction; hence, the term "sentence-combining exercises" will be used distinctly from the term "transformational grammar."

J. Ethical Considerations

The questionnaire was a voluntary activity. The student teachers were advised at the time of its administration that no consequence whatsoever would occur in their classes if they chose not to participate. Their names were not included in any reporting of this study. The study was given the approval of the Department of Secondary Education Ethics Review Committee.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Three strands of research pertain to this study. The first concerns research studies of the teaching of grammar in secondary schools. The second concerns the presentation of those research conclusions in widely-used textbooks for language arts education on the university and/or professional level. The third, the most immediately relevant, concerns the effects of these studies and theoretical approaches on the language arts education students as they prepare to integrate a theoretical framework with practical strategies for the teaching and learning of grammar.

A. Research on Grammar Teaching in Secondary Schools

Historically, teachers have taught traditional grammar with an emphasis upon drill and exercise; the debates over which grammar to use and whether to teach any formal grammar system at all are fairly recent developments. Traditional grammar instruction, as the most extensively used, has consequently also been the most abused approach. According to Postman and Weingartner (1966), for years the rationale for its prominant role in the language arts curriculum included a variety of illogical and indefensible tenets, such as that grammar study disciplines the mind, helps one to learn foreign languages, helps improve one's English, improves reading skill, and aids in the interpretation of literature. A movement toward teaching functional grammar for speech and writing developed after a 1917 study exposed the weak relationship between grammar and composition (Holbrook, 1983). Since then, through language research and changing cultural values, the rationale for grammar teaching has been exposed to close scrutiny and found lacking. The ultimate defense for traditional grammar--that it fostered correctness and effectiveness in speech and writing--has been challenged by empirical research studies. Theorists such as Moffett and Wagner (1983) contend that basic correctness in linguistic communication is elementary; most children master it before they enter school. The harder task, using grammar effectively, requires versatility in phrasing. This fluency will improve with growth and maturation, so Moffett and Wagner stated that the goal of language study must be to enhance or accelerate this growth.

To determine which methods of grammar instruction, if any, enhance or accelerate effective and correct use of language, researchers have grappled with the descriptive element of language. Is detailed grammatical terminology a help or a hindrance to language study? Most theorists agree that grammar instruction in the past has focused too narrowly upon knowledge of descriptive terminology. They disagree somewhat on the desirable amount of descriptive terminology, with some arguing that little or no such terminology is needed (Hunt, 1965; Moffett and Wagner, 1983). Hunt found that sentence-combining exercises without any formal grammatical terminology increase the syntactic maturity of students. Moffett and Wagner reject terminology as an aid to discussion of language, believing that teachers can help students more by illustrating alternative sentence constructions than by introducing new terms for their students to learn.

Other theorists, however, argue that every discipline requires a certain vocabulary; it is awkward and inefficient to attempt a discussion of concepts without the accessibility of a suitable vocabulary (Bassett, 1980; Foster, 1983). Bassett points out that knowledge of usage rules alone does not necessarily clarify meaning; he uses the examples "Crying, I heard him" and "I heard him crying" to illustrate two sentences with different meanings though both are correct in usage and identical in vocabulary (Bassett, 1980). Foster also points to the need for a common vocabulary to facilitate discussion of sentence structure, though he advocates the use of traditional grammar for its descriptors and sentence-combining exercises for work in sentence structure (Foster, 1983).

Although research has shaken the foundations of many long-standing beliefs about effective grammar instruction, the research itself is weakened by the tendency of researchers to condemn all grammar instruction because of poor grammar instruction. As teachers have misused and abused traditional study--most notably in an over-emphasis upon drill and rote learning, in neglect of students' compositions in favour of the "models" provided by grammar texts, perhaps in the use of grammar as a reinforcement of the teacher's power in the classroom, and in an insistence upon teaching grammar rules to children who are too young to apply them--researchers have focused upon these misuses and abuses. When they have proven that such practices are, in fact, counter-productive, they sometimes conclude that all formal grammar instruction is counter-productive. Newkirk (1978) cites the failure to distinguish between content and method as a major problem in grammar research. He and Fraser and Hodson (1978) regard most of the early grammar research as invalid due to the failure of researchers to agree upon a definition of "grammar" as used in their studies; many researchers failed to include any definition of it at all. Newkirk touched the core of the grammar research problem by noting that "grammar teaching" is not a single variable, but a complex of variables involving teachers' attitudes and methods, content, materials, and students' attitudes and learning readiness. One wonders whether such a complex of variables can be controlled adequately in a single study; yet conclusions have been drawn as if single-variable studies had actually been done.

After many flawed grammar studies, two complex and comprehensive studies were done. The studies of Roland J. Harris and W.B. Elley were landmarks in grammar research, effectively laying to rest many of the long-held beliefs about grammar instruction.

The two-year doctoral study of Roland J. Harris (1962) involved twelve-to-fourteen-year old children in five London schools. In each school, one group studied formal grammar with an emphasis upon the terminology of traditional grammar, and the other group studied composition by "direct method" with an emphasis upon example and imitation, without a grammar text or terminology. Both groups learned prescriptive elements of language, and both practiced composition. The evaluation of the groups included pre- and post-tests of a short-answer grammar test, which required knowledge and application of terminology, and a descriptive or narrative composition. The formal grammar students scored higher on the formal grammar test, while the direct method students scored better on the intricate evaluation of the composition. Thus, the formal grammar students learned to apply formal grammar rules on tests, but this knowledge did not transfer to their compositions. This study has been taken as a conclusive demonstration of the inadvisability of teaching formal traditional grammar to this age group (Braddock et.al., 1963).

Harris identified one critical and often overlooked aspect of research studies in grammar instruction: the time element. His two-year study drew many conclusions, but Harris noted that those conclusions were not evident after the initial nine months of the study. He cautioned against short-term studies in this field (Harris summarized in Braddock et.al., 1963).

The Harris study left several key questions unanswered, however. Earlier studies had indicated that students younger than fourteen years of age do not benefit from grammar instruction as readily as do older students (Macauley, 1947). Perhaps the Harris study would have been more significant had it been directed to older students, who might more capably apply the abstractions of formal grammar study. In neither the Harris study nor the Elley study (discussed below) were students selected with any regard for their attainment of the Piagetian stage of "formal operations." Students must achieve this level of cognitive development, it is commonly believed, to be able to transcend rote learning of grammar rules and apply these concepts to their own compositions (Fraser and Hodson, 1978). Using this logic, Sanborn argues for a postponement of formal grammar until the final year or two of secondary education, when more students are able to reflect upon their use of language as language rather than merely upon the transactive purpose of the language (Sanborn, 1986).

The Harris study provided some composition practice for the formal grammar group. The results indicate that "2x" amount of time spent on composition is preferable to "x" time spent on formal grammar and "x" time on composition. From this, Harris concluded that the formal grammar time was wasted. The question of the time ratio remains, however; perhaps with a different ratio of formal grammar to composition time, superior results might have been evident. Such a juggling of the time ratio might best vary according to group and teacher.

As described in Braddock, the extra composition work assigned to the direct method group was perhaps more motivating than the general composition work: "Most teachers gave cohesion and interest to the work by engaging in a variety of longer projects such as the completion of a diary, a form newspaper, an adventure story..., or a book of hobbies" (Harris, quoted in Braddock et.al., 1963). He noted that the formal grammar classes did not have much time for an attempted piece of continuous writing.

The importance of this distinction between the groups cannot be overestimated in considering the non-application of the grammar training to the students' compositions. Donald Graves, Donald Murray, and other composition researchers have stressed the importance of high-interest composition work. Students who are encouraged to write on personally-engaging topics generally enjoy writing more, are more motivated to work hard on writing that they "own," and consequently, write better than students who are assigned more impersonal topics (Graves, 1983; Murray,1980).

The three-year W.B. Elley study in New Zealand was designed to avoid the shortcomings of many shorter research studies (Elley, 1976). Elley, unlike Harris, controlled for teacher influence and matched students carefully into each of three groups. The evaluative criteria included reading comprehension, sentence structure, essay-writing skills, spelling, vocabulary, literature, and attitudes (Petrosky, 1977). The study also controlled for similar portions of morning and afternoon periods spent on each activity. Of the three groups, the reading and writing students (RW) spent 40% of their time on free reading of books, 40% on reading class sets with a few formal assignments, and 20% on creative writing. A second group (TG) studied transformational grammar during the RW group's free reading and creative writing time. The third group (LLE) used P.R. Smart's Let's Learn English series (1969), emphasizing traditional grammatical terminology and sentence analysis. Class sets of fiction, poetry, and drama books were used for teaching literature to this group. The results were startling: neither the transformational nor the traditional grammar study enhanced the students' language growth appreciably. The reading and writing group, which scored as well as the others, was also the only group to react positively to their English classes (Petrosky, 1977).

The Elley study left open the question of the time ratios, for the two grammar groups spent the majority of their time on formal grammar study. The reading and writing group had the highest-interest material, much of it tailored individually to the group members. Finally, the validity of judging all traditional grammar programs on the basis of one series of texts is questionable at best.

With the popularization of transformational grammar and the linguistic work of Noam Chomsky, attempts were made to integrate programs in transformational grammar into secondary schools. Transformational grammar, with its complex schematic diagrams, is no easier to learn than the descriptive terminology of traditional grammar, so it was not surprising that studies such as Harris' and Elley's did not support its use as a teaching tool of formal grammar in secondary classrooms. Kellogg Hunt (1965) also found that formal instruction in transformational grammar did not result in substantial differences or gains over a traditional grammar curriculum.

Hunt's study did, however, open a door to a different concept of grammar instruction. He found that students who worked through the exercises accompanying a transformational grammar course dramatically improved their writing ability in terms of syntactic maturity. Following Hunt's work came a series of other experiments in these sentence-combining exercises, most notably the work of Bateman and Zidonis and of Frank O'Hare, which confirmed Hunt's claim that the sentence-combining exercises increased writing abilities. Various studies used age, ability levels, and some differences in the exercises (the "signalled" ones of O'Hare versus the "open" ones of William Strong) as variables. The immediate post-test results generally showed remarkable gains (sometimes as much as four years' growth in eight months), but the delayed post-testing showed a signficant decline (up to two years) during the delay period. This raised the question of whether the growth exhibited was real or forced. Nevertheless, sentence-combining exercises were widely adapted as a more palatable and successful alternative to traditional grammar. Subsequent studies somewhat undercut the claims of the initial researchers, with other researchers finding that sentence-combining exercises are best used for junior high students rather than high school students, whose syntactic maturity may have surpassed that which could be spurred on by the exercises (MacNeill, 1981).

The experiments in sentence combining are based upon Kellogg Hunt's use of "syntactic maturity" as the measurement of writing ability, and in this use of a single measure lies the problem with such studies. Hunt assumed that "good" writing can be equated with syntactic maturity, a doubtful assumption. Syntactic maturity, though an important aspect of language ability, is not the only important aspect. Sentence-combining programs stress syntactic complexity regardless of the overall effect upon the reader or upon the purpose of the writer. Scholars such as E.D. Hirsch, Jr. (1977) stress the concept of readability, arguing that good writing ought to make for good reading; complexity for its own sake, without regard for communicative purpose, variety, stylistic preferences, or content, cannot be considered good.

Although it is relatively simple work to raise questions about the validity of some of the conclusions drawn from experimental inquiries into instruction in formal grammar, the consistency of the findings showing the ineffectiveness of traditional drill-and-exercise instruction is impressive and convincing. Current efforts in the field of writing instruction have focused upon offering students broader, richer, and more meaningful experiences in language and writing. Successful writing programs of the past decade have focused upon offering students varied opportunities for experience and awareness of the processes of writing. They have encouraged students to have ownership of their writing, to write for real and varied audiences, to publish their writing, and to become supportive communities of readers and writers. Such programs (Cormack, 1984; Graves, 1983; Murray,

1980) have achieved real growth in terms of sensible and interesting (i.e., "effective") writing as well as fostering an interest in writing for self-discovery and expression which exceeds the expectations of the "basic literacy" adherents.

B. Professional Literature on the Teaching of Grammar

With numerous experimental studies confirming the lack of relationship between instruction in formal grammar and improvement in writing skills, authors of language arts education textbooks and articles have advised teachers to broaden their horizons beyond the time-worn drill-and-exercise instruction in traditional grammar and adherence to doctrines of absolute "correctness" in language arts education. They have generally suggested that a broader understanding on the part of the teacher of the various grammars of the English language, more practice in writing for different purposes and audiences, a concept of linguistic appropriateness for purpose and situation, and an appreciation of the changing nature of the English language are all valuable attitudes and understandings to incorporate into the teaching of English language arts. This advice is not new, nor is it controversial among language arts education theorists; it has been repeated, often in the same phrasing (particularly in quotations from Robert Pooley and Richard Braddock), in most popular textbooks for decades.

One often-repeated quotation is from Robert Pooley's 1946 Teaching English Usage, in which Pooley's definition of good English set the tone for all those who advocate a focus upon appropriateness of language to suit the social situation and communicative purpose:

> Good English is that form of speech which is appropriate to the purposes of the speaker, true to the language as it is, and comfortable to speaker and listener. It is the product of custom, neither cramped by rule nor freed from all restraint; it is never fixed, but changes with the organic life of the language. (Pooley, 1946, p.14)

In a later text, Teaching English Grammar (1957), Pooley focused upon a detailed plan for teaching grammar in secondary schools. He stressed that the purpose of grammar instruction must always be to improve writing, and that such instruction cannot substitute for writing. Contrary to the normal practice of 1957, Pooley advocated no formal grammar instruction in the elementary school years. In grades 1 through 6, students would use language and write. Beginning in grade 7, students would be introduced to a few grammatical concepts each year; these concepts would be taught inductively, slowly, and with much application to the students' writing. Pooley cautioned that the concepts must be taught cumulatively and that teachers must eliminate both the yearly repetition and the focus on concepts which the students are too immature to use in their own writing. Once begun in grade 7, Pooley's program progressed from simple sentence structure in the junior high years to complex and varied sentence structures in the senior high years. In grades 7 and 8, assuming a five-hour per week language arts program, students would study grammar no more than one hour spaced over two or three short lessons. Pooley felt that in such a sequential program, students would be exposed to more mature concepts and structures as they matured, and the problem of over-saturation of grade 6 to 8 students with new grammatical concepts would be eliminated. Pooley's program, explained in great detail, involved a more specific and emphatic grammar course than many later theorists would advocate.

Loban, Ryan, and Squire's 1961 and 1969 Teaching English Language and Literature: Grades Seven-Twelve placed the responsibility for the decision making in grammar instruction squarely on the shoulders of the individual teacher, who must be familiar with several different grammars and keep abreast of linguistic scholarship. Given this knowledge, the teacher must be selective about what type and amount of grammar to teach to whom, choosing an "eclectic synthesis" of one or more grammars which strike him or her as the truest and most significant. The authors believed that the teacher ought to understand different grammars so well that he or she should need only plans and students (1969, pp.72-86). In terms of the timing of specific programs, they suggested introducing students to grammar in the elementary years, concentrating on it in the junior high years, and reinforcing it in the senior high years (a sequence which has certainly been common practice). Throughout the book, the authors stressed that language ability develops in active communication in social situations and through practice.

J.N. Hook, in his textbook The Teaching of High School English (1972), argued for a broader concept of language study than merely grammar and usage. Hook, like Loban, Ryan, and Squire, stressed relative rather than absolute correctness in language instruction. He advocated teaching about language inductively and illustrated his model of inductive teaching by transformational grammar.

In Teaching English Today, (1975), Dwight Burton, Kenneth Donelson, Bryant Fillion, and Beverly Haley emphasized the role of the language arts teacher in selecting from among the grammars of the language the materials and methods to use in his or her classroom. While advising teachers to teach inductively and to use student language, they offered guidelines for a program whose complexity would challenge the abilities of any experienced teacher and would, almost without doubt, be beyond the capability of fledging teachers:

> An inquiry into the structure of language should also include a discussion of questions of a general nature relating to grammar. Students need to understand what grammar is, what methods are used to develop grammars, and how complete and accurate existing grammars are. In short, they need to learn the processes, not memorize a product. An inquiry into process will help students realize that grammar is not a static, arbitrary system, but an open, changing one. These objectives might be reached by several approaches including having students write their own grammar or asking them to compare existing grammatical descriptions. (p.234)

James Moffett and Betty Jane Wagner, in their popular Student-Centered Language Arts and Reading, K-13: A Handbook for Teachers, issued a strong attack upon the teaching of any formal grammar by claiming that native speakers do not make grammatical mistakes--that which is often considered to be an error is generally a result of dialect or ineffective expression (1976, p.19). They advocated extensive oral and written experience in language as the means to improve students' facility of expression. They disapproved of teaching about language for the same reason as they dismissed teaching literary criticism: there simply is not enough time to teach the "science" of language and literature when teachers must see their primary goal as providing opportunities for experiences in language and literature (1976, p.18). However, recognizing that many schools and educators want a formal grammar component to their language arts programs, Moffett and Wagner suggested various games which would provide language practice in an entertaining manner and (almost incidentally) teach students something about the parts of speech and versatility in sentence structure.

Stephen N. Judy, in Explorations in the Teaching of English (1981), also highlighted the need to put the teaching of grammar into perspective and to distinguish between grammar, usage, and mechanics. He offered three useful purposes for the teaching of grammar: as a source of information about language and language learning for teachers, as a source of terms and tools for talking about language, and as an elective course for high school students (p. 233-34). While suggesting that the second purpose might be achieved by teaching brief units to junior high school students, and noting that the high school elective course ought to make clear to the students that the course would not improve their writing skills, Judy offered no specifics on the teaching of grammar; his focus was on exploring the dimensions of language.

While the authors of language arts education textbooks of the past several decades have called consistently for the focus of language education to be broader than a mere emphasis upon grammar and prescriptive usage, their focus and emphasis for such instruction has changed somewhat. They all stress that writing practice is essential to the improvement of writing skills, but through the years the role of formal grammar instruction has been de-emphasized. The theorists have progressed from an assumption that some formal grammar ought to be taught in a structured, sequential program (which implies grammar taught in separate, discrete lessons and units) to an assumption that whatever grammar instruction occurs ought to occur only in reference to student writing. While they all advocate putting grammar into a "proper" perspective, that perspective seems to have gone further toward one extreme or the other. One extreme emphasizes a study of grammatical systems as an investigation into the human behaviour of language, while the other extreme would see formal grammar instruction de-emphasized through integration with student writing. If language education theorists have changed as the years have passed, it is only by becoming more firm in their convictions and more willing to follow these convictions through to their logical conclusions.

This change is evident in the Alberta Junior High School Language Arts Curriculum Guide. In the 1978 edition, a language-in-use philosophy was advocated, but a recommended textbook, Patterns of Communicating, was not necessarily consistent with this intent. In the 1987 edition of the guide, however, this textbook was de-listed, thus making a more consistent match between philosophy and resources.

The beginning language arts teacher, even when presented with a consistent philosophy, may be somewhat at a loss for practical classroom strategies. Those textbooks which advocate teaching grammar more or less for its own sake, as a study in human language behaviour, place a very heavy responsibility on the teacher for keeping abreast of developments in linguistics. The teacher must assimilate a very complex and changing discipline and then select from among the grammars and theories he or she has learned those which are most suitable to his or her students. Little guidance is offered to teachers in these textbooks in terms of methodology or materials. Other textbooks focus upon teaching whatever amount of grammar will be "just enough" for the students to facilitate discussions of their writing. These texts also offer little in the way of practical help for the fledgling teacher, as they focus upon games and puzzles to teach grammatical points.

In language arts education textbooks, as well as in articles in professional journals, there is an explicit awareness of the discrepancy between the philosophy advocated and the continued practice of language arts teachers. Pooley surveyed the state of grammar teaching in American schools in the decade ending in 1956 and found that, while a progressive minority of teachers were working for change, the vast majority continued to teach grammar as they had been taught --by rule and formal exercises with an intention to improve usage. Students spent between 4% (in rural schools) and 8% (in urban schools) of class time in writing their own sentences to apply grammar rules, while spending the overwhelming bulk of their time working on formal analysis and terminology. Teachers surveyed ranked performance activities in language as less important than knowledge about language. This situation in the classrooms was in complete opposition to the articles about grammar instruction in the English Journal during 1953-1956, all of which advocated functional, realistic uses of grammar and the use of student writing.

The controversy over grammar instruction did have one effect in the classroom, however: though teachers continued to teach formal, traditional grammar, they began to spend less class time on it. James R. Squire and Roger K. Applebee, reporting in 1968 on their four-year survey of classroom English instruction, noted that language was the least taught and least well-taught aspect of the language arts curriculum, comprising only 13.5% of class time. In the majority of their sample population of 158 schools, language instruction focused upon mechanical drill and error-based instruction in both grammar and usage. They recommended that teachers ought to learn about different grammars of the English language, commenting that many teachers had indicated a desire to do so but were unable to because of time constraints. They found that the most successful programs were those in which the language arts faculties had had intensive inservice training to become familiar with new developments in grammar and usage study as well as in the practical problems of relating this study to other areas of the language arts curriculum (Squire and Applebee, 1968).

The decade of the 1980s has seen some progress as more classroom teachers have reported successes with writing programs based on writing processes, but the professional literature still provides a forum for commentary about grammar instruction. Articles by "reformed" grammarians are not uncommon, as teachers discuss their realization of the futility of their grammar instruction (McQuade, 1980; Small, 1985). But the so-called "back to basics" movement has spurred some defenders of traditional grammar to speak out as well (Davis, 1984). Others, perhaps in an attempt to have it both ways, develop games and "tricks" for making grammar study palatable (Seay, 1987) or repeat the call for integration of grammar and writing instruction (Vavra, 1987).

C. The Issue of Grammar in Language Arts Education Programs

Where does the neophyte teacher stand in relation to this discrepancy between theory and practice? Studies focusing upon the attitudes of student teachers and first-year professional language arts teachers often highlight the discrepancy between the teacher preparation programs offered in universities and the harsh realities and pressures of the secondary school classroom. In the language arts classroom, this discrepancy revolves around the issue of grammar: while teacher preparation programs spend relatively little time teaching grammar or teaching about the teaching of grammar, life in the classroom cannot escape attention to it.

A 1977 study conducted by Annette Edwards Platt showed that the secondary teacher education programs in Texas focused primarily upon literature (sixty percent of the required English courses), with language courses comprising thirty percent, composition five percent, and methods five percent. The majority of the beginning teachers participating in Platt's survey believed that they were inadequately prepared in their academic specialization and that there was an imbalance in their preparation among the various divisions of English (Lange, 1982).

Waterfall reported similar findings from his 1981 survey of seventy-two high school English teachers in Utah in which the teachers rated various areas of their teacher preparation program. The teachers felt undertrained in thirteen areas, most of which concerned writing; three of the five areas in which they felt overtrained dealt with literature (Lange, 1982).

McCaleb investigated teacher attitudes toward prescriptive grammar instruction. The Maryland teachers he surveyed spoke out for a more realistic presentation of practical classroom situations to prepare student teachers for the realities of language instruction in the classroom (McCaleb, 1979).

Beginning in the spring of 1978, each student teacher at Tennessee Tech evaluated the English and Education courses, the methods course, and cooperation between the two departments. More than one-half of the respondents in this survey suggested that more grammar courses be added at basic and advanced levels (Myers, 1983).

Some teacher preparation programs have attempted to address the discrepancy between the philosophy advocated by language arts educators in the professional literature and the continuing practice of classroom teachers. They have recognized that, as Squire and Applebee among others have noted, we teach as we were taught. Therefore, they attempt to break this cycle of traditional grammar instruction by educating student teachers in more research-based methods and by providing experiences by which preservice teachers can broaden their concepts of language study.

An attempt was made at California State Polytechnic University -Pomona to improve the education of student teachers regarding their preparation for teaching language. In an experimental program devised by Katherine Briggs Seibert, English majors were placed randomly into one of three grammar-model instruction units which explored language theory. Although none of the grammar teaching models proved superior to the others, the instruction was considered to have been beneficial to all three groups of students. Seibert concluded that the curriculum should place a heavier emphasis upon the general principles of language and the grammars of English (Seibert, 1975).

Jensen reported on usage fieldwork in an undergraduate language arts methods course for pre-service elementary teachers (1974). The course required investigation of language, stressing the principles that what constitutes "good" English is open to investigation and that a doctrine of appropriateness prevails in language usage. The goals of the course were to break prospective teachers of the habit of rigid dogmatism prevalent in many schools and to lead them into an inquiry-based approach which would carry over into their classrooms.

Jack Folsom, in both 1973 and 1981, conducted surveys of teachers to determine areas needing improvement in teacher preparation programs in Montana. After the earlier survey results showed that teachers felt poorly prepared in language and composition, the Montana teacher preparation programs instituted new courses attempting to meet this need. In the follow-up survey, teachers rated the teaching of grammar as needing the most strengthening at the undergraduate level. Folsom noted:

> That many teachers themselves lack conscious knowledge of English fundamentals, particularly of syntactic structures, and of how to explain in grammatical terms how a sentence operates, may be a disturbing revelation to some academics, especially those who thought the new linguistics course requirements were taking care of the problem. It is clear from responses of teachers about themselves and others, as well as from assessments and observation of prospective teachers about to go into the field, that knowledge of grammar and usage, with training in appropriate ways to incorporate grammar and usage into the curriculum, deservedly belongs at the top of the list of further changes needed in English teacher preparation." (Folsom, 1983, p. 27)

Bill O'Rourke, in his taped conversations with first-year English teachers, highlighted the problem of the philosophical discrepancy between the university and the secondary schools regarding the role of grammar:

> The mantra of these first-year teachers is discipline and grammar, discipline and grammar, discipline and grammar. We may be disenchanted by this, but we should hardly be surprised. Anyone who reads about minimum competency testing,

> back to basics, declining test scores, should realize that the schools are a reflection of that kind of thinking and that teachers are in that kind of an environment. Leaving aside the discipline issue for the moment let us look at a content issue -- grammar. I was nervous about this question-should an English education staff be proud or ashamed of the fact that fifteen out of seventeen graduates, after one semester of teaching, tell us that the one thing they wish the university would have offered them is a course in how to teach grammar? (O'Rourke, 1983, p.21)

O'Rourke lamented the lack of understanding at the university level of the realities of the social and instructional system that the beginning teacher faces. Although his goal in his linguistics methods course was to expand the concept of language study beyond a solitary emphasis upon grammar teaching, he recognized that that had little bearing upon the situations in which the teachers found themselves. His efforts to reform the teaching of grammar had to come to grips with the world of secondary education.

In the broader area of teaching writing, Janet Miller conducted three case studies of student teachers who were teaching writing to determine whether a connection could be established between the student teachers' self-concepts as writers and their teaching of writing (Miller, 1983). She asked the three participants to record in journals their memories of their own experiences as students learning to write in school and their current experiences as teachers learning to teach writing. She asked whether they could see connections between the ways in which their former teachers taught them to write and the ways in which they were attempting to teach writing. Miller established the value of searching for the effects of one's own schooling upon his or her current attitudes and practices. In this regard, her work is similar to the aim of this study, which is to discover whether student teachers' past experiences with grammar learning are significant factors in their present attitudes and intentions regarding the teaching of grammar.

Research studies during recent decades have unanimously failed to establish a positive link between instruction in formal grammar and improvement in writing skills. Mindful of these studies, language arts theorists, with increasing conviction, have called upon teachers to reduce or eliminate their emphasis upon formal grammar instruction in the classroom. However, whether unaware of or unconvinced by these research findings, classroom teachers and society in general have continued to support the teaching of formal grammar through the traditional drill-and-exercise method.

As they prepare for student teaching and the beginning of their professional careers, language arts education students must somehow reconcile these conflicting recommendations and expectations. Surveys of student teachers and first-year teachers have shown that these beginning professionals feel ill-prepared by their university courses to teach language in general and grammar in particular. Their university education does not prepare them to face the reality of the classroom, where traditional grammar drill is still quite common.

This study was conducted to discover the perceptions of a group of University of Alberta language arts education students regarding their experiences as learners, student teachers, and future teachers of grammar and writing. They were asked to recall and assess their education in grammar and writing and to discuss their experiences in and intentions for teaching grammar.

CHAPTER III

REPORTING AND DISCUSSION OF THE DATA

The dilemma concerning the discrepancy between the findings of grammar researchers and the common practice of formal traditional grammar instruction in the classroom directly affects those education students who intend to teach language arts. During their teacher education program, they must prepare to resolve this discrepancy in their own classrooms. A questionnaire (see Appendix) was administered to two classes of language arts education students who were in their final professional term of their teacher education program in March, 1986. The questionnaire focused upon the respondents' ideas about the meaning of the terms "grammar" and "grammar study," their experiences as learners and student teachers of grammar, and their intentions for teaching grammar within their own classrooms.

A. Background of Respondents

Respondents were asked to supply information regarding their backgrounds in terms of age, native language(s), and education. Their responses contributed to a descriptive profile, which is discussed below.

1. Personal Information

The 44 respondents to the questionnaire had varied cultural and educational backgrounds. They consisted of 30 females and 14 males. Twenty-five respondents were between 20 and 22 years old; 10 respondents were between the ages of 23 and 25; three were between

26 and 28; and the remaining six respondents were 30 years or older. The average age of the 44 was 23.8 years, with a range from 20 to 38 years.

The responses of the six respondents (three males, three females) who were 30 years old or older were compared to those of their under-30 colleagues to determine whether age was a factor in people's experiences or attitudes; when these two groups differed in their responses, they will be discussed in appropriate sections of this chapter.

Thirty-nine respondents had English as their first language. Two people were bilingual from early childhood. One of these spoke English and Polish as native languages; the other spoke English and Italian. Three respondents had native languages other than English (Polish, German, and Ukrainian).

The responses of the five respondents who were bilingual or had native languages other than English were compared with the group of unilingual native-English speakers. These responses will be discussed in appropriate sections of this chapter.

2. Education

Thirty-five respondents attended elementary and secondary schools in Alberta. Of these, 29 were educated exclusively in Alberta. Six attended schools both in Alberta and one other place; of these six, five went to schools in other Canadian provinces and one attended schools in England and France. Seven respondents received all their schooling in Canadian provinces other than Alberta. Two received their elementary and secondary schooling completely out-side of Canada; one of these was educated in the United States of America and one was educated in Somalia and Italy.

Thirty respondents received all of their university education at the University of Alberta. Of these, one had already earned a Bachelor of Arts degree. Thirteen people had attended other universities as well as the University of Alberta; of these 13, six had earned degrees elsewhere and seven had not. The degrees included three Bachelor of Arts, one Bachelor of Education, one Bachelor of Science, and one Master of Arts. One person had both a B.A. and a B.S.

The responses of the seven students who had already earned degrees were compared with the pre-degree respondents. These responses will be discussed in appropriate sections of this chapter.

The respondents were asked to estimate the number of one-term university courses they had taken in literature, writing, and linguistics/language study. As might be expected, literature courses predominated. Forty-one people noted specific numbers of courses. The average number of literature courses taken was 9.6, with a range extending from four to 20 courses. Thirty-nine people indicated the number of writing courses they had taken. The average number was 1.5 courses, with a range extending from zero to nine courses. A similar average was found in the linguistics/language study area. Forty-one people responded to the question, producing an average of 1.6 courses. In the linguistics/language study area, the range was from zero to four courses, a much narrower range than was indicated in the other two areas. Overall, there were 13 people who had taken no writing courses, six people who had taken no linguistics/language study courses, and three people who had taken neither a writing nor a linguistics/language study course during their university educations. The 43 people who noted their average grades in English courses produced an average grade for the group of 7.1, with a range extending from 6 to 8.5.

Respondents were asked to estimate the amount of instruction they received in grammar in various types of courses by indicating "None," "Some," or "Extensive." The results of this question are reported in Table 1.

Table 1. -- Amount of Grammar Instruction Received in English Courses (N=44)

Type of Course	Amount of Grammar Instruction None	Some	Extensive	No Response
Literature	27	15	1	1
Writing	7	16	10	11
Linguistics/Language	7	17	13	7
Curriculum & Instruction	21	19	0	4
Foreign Language	8*	8	17	11

*Respondents were asked to specify which foreign language(s) they had studied. All the respondents who indicated "None" did not indicate the foreign language that they had studied. This may indicate that these people misunderstood the question and may have meant to indicate that they had not studied a foreign language.

Thirty-nine people indicated the University of Alberta courses in which they had studied grammar. The courses were in the English, Linguistics, Secondary Education, French, and Italian Departments. The most commonly-cited courses were English 313 (12 citations), Linguistics 303 (10 citations), English 309 (8 citations), English 288 (7 citations), and English 307 and English 311 (each with 6 citations). Five people indicated that they had not studied grammar in any University of Alberta course.

3. Discussion

The over-30 age group had a heavier emphasis upon literature courses in university, with an average of 14 courses, compared to the 9.5 average of the under-30s. They had a lower average of writing and linguistics/language study courses than did the under-30s. The average number of writing courses for the over-30s was 1.2, while the under-30s had an average of 1.6; the over-30s averaged 1.2 linguistics/language study courses, while the under-30s averaged 1.7 courses. Two of the over-30 group had already earned undergraduate degrees.

The seven post-degree respondents averaged 15.7 literature courses (the non-degrees averaged 8.6 literature courses), but had fewer writing and linguistics/language study courses than the pre-degree respondents. None of the seven post-degree respondents had taken a writing course, and their average number of linguistics/language study courses was .8, compared to an average for the pre-degree respondents of 1.5 writing courses and 1.8 linguistics/language study courses.

B. Definitions of "Grammar and "Grammar Study"

Respondents were asked to define grammar and to indicate what they believed to be included in grammar study. The 41 responses showed a wide variety of ideas, which ranged from very specific to rather vague or ambivalent.

1. Sentence Structure and Parts of Speech

The most common features of the definitions were attention to the study of sentence structure and parts of speech, with 21 and 19 citations (51% and 46%) respectively. Of these, some were severely limited to one of these areas, as in the cases of the two people who wrote, "Grammar involves the method of sequencing words and the forms of those words in the composition of sentences, the basic units for ordering thought" (R22) and "'Grammar study' indicates the parts of speech of a language. The word 'grammar' refers to these parts of speech" (R17). Most respondents, however, wrote broader definitions which also included attention to other concerns, such as punctuation or communication.

2. Correctness and Mastery of Rules

The third most common element indicated in the definitions, cited by 34% of respondents, was an overriding concern for correctness and mastery of rules (14 citations). Only a few of these respondents included correctness and mastery as one aspect among several comprising grammar study, while most of the 14 used correctness and mastery as the dominant aspect. Responses indicating this view included the following:

> Grammar: all-encompassing rules and regulations for the correct use of a language in speech and writing. (R2)

> Grammar is a system of language governed by a set of universally accepted rules. Each particular language, therefore, has its own grammatical system. Grammar is the basic framework from which we build our language. Grammar study should culminate in the mastery of the "system," and the ability to manipulate one's environment through the successful manipulation of language. (R5)

> Grammar study is trying to master the specific parts and func-

> tions that make up a sentence. Grammar is a set of rules that are enforced to make up a language. (R9)

> Grammar study is the attempt to master all aspects of the English language, whether it be reading, writing, or speaking. (R10)

> To me, "grammar" means the sum total of underlying principles or "laws" of language use, whether written or spoken. It also includes the components of language that are subject to manipulation by the aforementioned principles. (R37)

Although many respondents were concerned with correctness and mastery, only two respondents mentioned the idea of appropriateness with regard to grammar study. Of these two, only one actually seemed to mean appropriateness rather than correctness.

> Grammar includes the study of words and their use for various purposes (e.g., colloquial/informal/formal), emphasizing current "correct" usage (i.e., currently accepted). Specifically, it includes such things as sentence structure, tenses, and correct use of pronouns and modifiers. (R40)

The second person who wrote of "appropriateness" may actually have been thinking more of "correctness;" it is difficult to judge from the response:

> Grammar means the appropriate use of words in oral and written language. Included in "grammar study" are parts of speech, the appropriate use of these parts, and the meaning of these parts of speech. (R38)

3. Language Structure and Language-in-Use

The next most commonly-cited components of definitions of grammar and study were the ideas of the structure of the language at the paragraph or essay level (12 citations, or 29%) and a concern with the study of how a language actually "works" in writing and in usage (8 citations, or 20%). These responses tended to be broader than the responses which emphasized correctness over everything else, though many also included correctness as a feature. Such comments as the following are typical of respondents who included ideas of beyond-sentence organization or language-in-use in their definitions:

> Grammar is the study of how a language works. Grammar study involves analyzing and defining the terms by which one looks at the language and then practicing the analysis by writing. (R1)

> Grammar involves word usage, sentence, paragraph and essay or article construction. Grammar study would include appropriate word order, word choice (tense, singular, plural, etc.) proper sentence construction and paragraph organization. (R32)

> Grammar is the study of the structure of a language. Grammar study involves examining words, phrases, and sentences to discover meaning and how our language contains unique structures (e.g., word order) that contribute to meaning and understanding, and promotes better usage. (R33)

4. Punctuation and Spelling

Punctuation was the next most commonly-cited component of grammar and grammar study (7 citations, or 17%). Punctuation was never cited as the overriding concern of the respondent, but was included among other aspects of the definition, such as spelling (5 citations, or 12%), as in the following: "A system for organizing and understanding the structure of language. Included are spelling, parts of speech, sentence structure, punctuation" (R23).

5. Communication

An emphasis upon the communicative aspect of grammar and grammar study was noted in five responses (12%). The quotation from Respondent 33 above and the following are typical of these responses: "The study of the parts of a language and how they fit together to provide meaning, which is essential in communication" (R3).

Several definitions involved more uncommon aspects than those cited above. Three respondents identified the history of the language, one cited phonetics, one mentioned language as a science, and one cited the definitions of the words in a sentence as aspects of grammar study.

6. Ambivalence in Definitions

Four respondents indicated some confusion or ambivalence about the meaning of grammar and grammar study. This uncertainty did not necessarily indicate a definition which was inadequate when compared to the definitions of respondents who were more certain about their definitions. In one instance (R36), the confusion of thought is mirrored by an equally ambivalent written statement. The comments of these four respondents are as follows:

> It doesn't mean a great deal to me. Words such as mechanics of written speech, organization of proper language use, study and practice of parts of speech, punctuation. (R13)
>
> When I think of grammar, I imagine the naming of parts of speech, dividing sentences into subjects and predicates, and so on. In my mind (heart) it is distinct from writing--rationally, I know they are inextricably connected. (R36)
>
> Grammar refers to labelling and allegedly understanding the parts of written sentences and/or speech. Grammar study, I imagine, is undertaken with the goal of imparting this ability in mind. (R43)
>
> Grammar means the study of sentence parts and word classifications for the purpose of...clarification, I guess. (R44)

Three respondents left this question unanswered; of these, one indicated in a later section of the questionnaire that he had no ideas yet as to how he intended to teach grammar.

7. Discussion

The overriding impression created by these definitions of grammar and grammar study was that many respondents were confused about the nature of the topic. Usage and punctuation, although strictly speaking might not be included in a linguist's definition of the term "grammar," may arguably be included in a discussion by language arts teachers for whom students' punctuation and usage may be closely connected to grammar study. However, such topics as spelling, history of the language, phonetics, and vocabulary ("definitions of words in a sentence") should not in any way be regarded as the province of "grammar study." Eleven respondents, or 27%, included such inappropriate elements in their definitions.

Inappropriate definitions were not the only troubling aspect of the grammar definitions offered by the respondents. Those whose complete emphasis focused upon absolute "correctness" and mastery of rules also raise questions about their understanding of grammar as it is currently regarded. Current thinking among language theorists and curriculum writers (Moffett and Wagner, 1976; Alberta Language Arts Junior High Curriculum Guide, 1987) emphasizes correctness not as an absolute but as a function of appropriateness for situation and purpose. Indeed, the 1978 Alberta curriculum guide for secondary language arts which was in effect at the time of this survey also took this position. If the inappropriate definitions and those emphasizing absolute correctness are considered in addition to those which were ambivalent, then general misunderstandings of current or even of general notions of grammar were certainly in evidence.

Six respondents had no linguistics or language study courses. Four of these six offered definitions of grammar which were either ambivalent, included nonstandard aspects as a major focus, or focused primarily upon correctness.

Of the three respondents who had each taken four linguistics or language study courses (Rs 4, 14, 41), one offered no definition of grammar, but the other two offered definitions which were more sophisticated than those of most respondents. These two mentioned syntax and functions [note plural] of parts of speech in sentences.

C. Recollections and Assessments of Grammar and Writing Instruction

Respondents were asked to recall and assess the instruction they received in grammar and writing and to describe themselves as learners of grammar and writing. This information was gathered in two ways on the questionnaire: from a detailed narrative recollection of elementary and secondary school instruction in grammar and writing (Section C, Question 1) and from a series of questions which required either numerical-scale or short-written assessments (Section C, Questions 2-10). This latter part was more structured and less anecdotal than the narrative. The information gathered in these two ways occasionally overlapped, depending upon the information offered in the narrative. Not surprisingly, the recollections varied widely, with two respondents reporting no or few clear memories of their schooling in these areas and 42 others offering occasionally vivid and detailed memories of certain teachers, methods, and attitudes.

All 44 respondents indicated the various circumstances in which grammar was taught to them. Table 2 summarizes these findings:

Table 2. — Circumstances of Grammar Instruction (N=44)

Circumstances	Respondents No.	%
During periods of formal grammar instruction	40	91
In reference to your compositions	29	66
In regard to speech	6	14
In regard to reading	6	14
In a foreign language class	27	61

Respondents assessed how much they retained of the grammar learned in their elementary and secondary schooling. They were given four options from which to choose. The results of the 43 responses are listed in Table 3 below.

Table 3. -- Amount of Grammar Retained (N=43)

Response	Respondents No.	%
A great deal, almost all that was taught	3	7
A sound basic knowledge	14	33
Some practical knowledge, but not much analytic skill	20	47
Little or no practical knowledge or analytic skill	6	14

1. Overview of the Elementary School Years

Eleven of the respondents recalled instruction in grammar and/or writing in elementary school. Several others noted that although they had no clear recollections, they believed that they had received some such instruction. Respondent 7's comment is typical in this regard: "My clearest memories of formal grammar studies are from elementary school, but I cannot recall any specific skills."

a. Grammar Instruction

Those respondents with fairly clear recollections of these early school years remembered parts of speech study above all else (Rs 2, 13, 18, and 33). Others recalled studying sentence structure (Rs 3, 30, and 37), phonics in grades 1 to 3 (R 18), or spelling (R 22). Only one respondent noted any deviation from a fairly traditional grounding. This occurred after several years of traditional study of grammar drills and exercises:

> During my later elementary years progressive education became the thrust of the schools that I attended. I remember being very creative and writing as an expression of feelings, not as an exercise in exposition. Of course, then I coodn't sppell reel wel for a few years. (R30)

b. Writing Programs or Instruction

Four respondents recalled writing programs or writing instruction in the elementary school years. These recollections tended to be somewhat impressionistic. One person remembered rudimentary writing instruction in forming letters, with an emphasis upon neatness and, in later years, writing assignments. She noted:

> Writing: copying out the letters of the alphabet making sure that capital letters were 2 lines high and small letters 1 line. Marked for neatness. Small writing assignments of 1 or 2 pages (Gr. 6) on "Safety in and around Your Home." (R3)

A second, quoted above, recalled being creative and writing expressively (R30). A third recalled the linking of grammar and writing:

> In elementary school I particularly remember that the focus of grammar was based upon the identification of the basic sentence elements (S V O), and instruction in writing was based upon this fundamental principal [sic]. Identification of parts of speech grew more complex with progression through the grades. Writing was then taught with the goal in mind that students' writing should reflect the understanding of these concepts. (R37)

The fourth person's recollection of writing in elementary schools was of a more personal nature; she was placed in a remedial class for reading and writing in grade 2 and was assigned extra oral and written work (R38).

2. Overview of the Junior High School Years

Twenty-one respondents (50%) had clear recollections of grammar and/or writing instruction in grades 7 to 9, the junior high years. Eighteen of these (43% of total respondents for the narrative) wrote that grammar received more emphasis during these years than at any other time in their schooling.

a. Grammar Instruction

Those respondents who recalled specific aspects of grammar instruction had memories of separate, nonintegrated lessons of drill, repetitive workbook exercises, and rote memorization. Such recollections from junior high instruction account for 15 of the 26 citations of such grammar exercises during all phases of schooling. For a few students, there were also positive experiences involving grammar instruction in conjunction with creative writing, but for most who indicated a personal response to junior high grammar instruction, it was a boring and occasionally frustrating experience.

b. Writing Programs or Instruction

Five respondents recalled writing programs or writing instruction during the junior high school years. Of the five, Respondent 37, quoted previously, was the only one who saw a clear link between the writing and grammar instruction, but he saw a weakening of the strong link that had been established in elementary school:

> In my secondary school experience, the link between grammar and writing became far more tenuous. An emphasis upon grammar study to complement writing was taught in grades 7 and 9. (R37)

Of the other four, one supplied no details of the writing instruction other than the grade level at which it occurred (R20); one provided a basic designation of writing instruction as being labelled either "creative writing" or "composition" (R6); and two recalled that the writing was isolated from the grammar instruction:

> I had a great deal of instruction and practice in paragraph writing and creative writing, but grammar was never connected to writing. (R1)

> In grade 9, especially, we had many excellent writing assignments. Our teacher was more concerned with our ideas and forming a "good" paper rather than specifically identifying [parts of speech] in each sentence. (R3)

3. Overview of the High School Years

Seventeen respondents (40%) recalled some aspect of grammar, writing instruction, or writing programs during their high school years. Nine of these specifically remembered studying grammar in some manner, while the others focused upon the writing they did.

a. Grammar Instruction

Of the nine who recalled studying grammar, seven noted that it was taught as a separate entity; two recalled it being taught in conjunction with writing (R4, 38).

b. Writing Programs or Instruction

Of the twelve respondents who mentioned writing in their high school careers, only two discussed writing instruction (R20, 38) while the others noted writing assignments or writing practice, sometimes specifically without instruction. (Their reactions to these assignments without instruction were quite negative, as will be discussed in the "Methodologies" section below.)

As high school students, the respondents felt that they were expected to know enough grammar to write well; writing problems due to grammatical concerns were dealt with on an individual or occasional basis. The following comments were typical of responses from respondents in this situation:

> In high school, grammar was mostly mentioned in reference to paragraphs or writing assignments that were handed back, and we would sometimes go over "trouble spots." (R2)

> Grammar study in secondary school seemed to be conducted on a trial and error basis in conjunction with writing essays. By this I mean that errors were cited on my essays but no attempt was made to teach me how to correct them. (R7)

> I'm not sure if I was taught grammar in high school but I do know that my essays were marked for grammar quite harshly. (R27)

> I don't remember grammar ever being extensively taught. Mistakes were noted on assignments, but most people tossed those out without really looking at the corrections. (R40)

4. Instructors and Methodologies

a. Instructors

Thirteen respondents cited individual teachers whom they recalled as being particularly helpful or harmful in teaching grammar and/ or writing. Seven of the respondents recalled positive memories of teachers, and seven recalled negative memories. One respondent cited both positive and negative memories of two teachers.

In the overall questionnaire responses, respondents were critical of traditional grammar exercises which consisted of drill, repetition, and memorization; however, three respondents recalled with approval teachers who employed such methods:

> ...in grade 11 I was taught by Mr. ___. First of all, the system he used was not too unusual. I know it is a well-known traditional way of grammar teaching consisting of circling different elements of sentences, labelling them with arrows pointing to modifiers, then underlining subjects and predicates. The thing that made this otherwise tedious exercise memorable for me, and helped me to learn it more thoroughly,

> was his manner. He was exciting and flamboyant; his physical appearance also helped, since he was six feet tall with a flaming red face. (R16)

> My most vivid recollection of grammar instruction is in a grade 10 or 11 setting. I recall that the teacher taught primarily language grammar and that the method involved endless drills and exercises in what was called "parsing" -- the complete breaking down of all levels of sentences into every possible descriptive grammatic form from parts of speech to clauses, including how elipses operate with respect to the latter. The teacher was a woman with a military background who drilled us in a very no-nonsense fashion accompanying her verbal instruction with resounding thwacks of a yellow-tipped wooden pointer across the words and phrases of sentences written on the board. I attribute my competence in large part to these exercises... (R22)

> In junior high, I recall a teacher who spent a multitude of lunch hours repeating the various aspects of English gramamr to the entire class until we all understood. I appreciate her to this day. I believe I was given some excellent grammar instruction while going to school; repetition of key points comes to mind and attention to small mistakes like to and too, its and it's. (R39)

Several respondents' positive memories of teachers and of learning grammar involved methodologies which, though not remarkably novel, were at least more creative than workbook drills and exercises. One recalled a grade 8 teacher who "created a character and focused the entire grammar unit around this character" (R9). Another person remembered enjoying grammar work in grades 5 and 6 because "I liked my teacher....she always had big bulletin board displays and posters about grammar which seemed to make it more interesting" (R28).

Two respondents praised English teachers who integrated grammar study with creative writing. One of these teachers combined grammar and creative writing assignments (R38); the other used a poem to teach parts of speech: "She managed to make it fun and practical at the same time" (R39).

The seven negative recollections of the respondents included negative responses both to teachers' methodologies (always the boredom and futility of the drill and exercise method) and to certain teachers' apparent unwillingness or inability to help students to learn. The following two quotations illustrate these complaints, with the first presenting an especially vivid indictment of the drill and exercise method of teaching, and the second presenting a bitter complaint about incompetent teachers. (An example of a complaint about teachers who seemed unwilling to teach grammar and writing is that of R7, quoted previously.)

> In grade 9 we were given a sheet of 100 terms and 100 definitions and we had to match them up. Some of the terms had gone out of use 25 years previously and others were so minute in importance that they were no longer relevant....I will never forget that grade 9 LA teacher who should have retired 10 years before I was in her class or else revised and updated her material. (R27)

> The thing I remember most about the study of grammar and writing instruction in school was that the teachers seemed to dread it as much as the students. The school curriculum required that all English courses have one-third of the class assigned to the study of grammar and writing. The teachers never did seem to reach that amount and tried to get away with teaching it as little as possible. Teachers seemed to know almost as little about grammar as the students did and would often be found incorrectly marking grammar sheets. (R24)

b. Methodologies

(1.) Rote Memorization and Workbook Drills

In the narratives, 26 respondents (62%) specifically cited rote memorization and workbook drills isolated from writing experiences as prominant features of their instruction in grammar and writing at some phase of their schooling. As discussed above, occasionally the individual teacher was a factor in the respondent's evaluation of this methodology, in terms of both positive and negative responses. Many other respondents discussed this instructional strategy without reference to individual teachers.

The isolated drill-and-exercise approach was occasionally seen as being beneficial, but more often was discussed in negative terms, with respondents citing boredom, irrelevance, and lack of integration with writing as their major complaints. Of the 26 respondents who specifically recalled isolated drill-and-exercise instruction, 18 (43% of total) offered negative comments about the instruction; five (12%) offered comments which were positive to some extent; and three (7%) offered neutral comments.

The negative statements often cited examples of teaching strategies which were, bluntly stated, illogical and ill-conceived, such as expecting students to apply terminology without understanding the terms. A sense of frustration or sarcasm is evident in many of the comments about these strategies which were not evident in comments concerning any other teaching strategy. Examples of the negative statements follow:

> [In junior high]...I also remember being bogged down and confused because I did not know the definitions of the aspects of grammar (e.g., dangling modifiers, appositives, gerunds, subjunctive mood, etc.). It seemed as if we were learning how these aspects applied to the sentence without first knowing what they meant. This, of course, caused confusion. (R31)

> My one memory of "grammar" per se is from a grade ten class (I think) where we were underlining, circling, and dividing sentences for reasons which have long since disappeared, if I ever knew them. (R36)

> My study of grammar in the secondary school stressed a relationship between the English and Latin languages. Even though English has many words which derive from the Latin language, the two languages do not have the same or similar structure. Thus, in high school, I spent a great deal of time applying

> Latin rules to the structure of the English sentence. (R42)

> I remember always thinking that diagramming sentences was a total waste of time and it must have been because I do not even remember how I went about doing such a thing, much less what it is exactly. (R44)

The five statements which reflected a positive attitude toward the rote memorization and workbook exercise method of teaching grammar did not uniformly reflect total satisfaction with this approach. Four of the five people who commented positively on this approach qualified their statements. One of the four noted that the drills and exercises were made memorable only because of his teacher's manner (R16); two others recalled the repetition as being boring "after the 25th assignment underlining nouns in sentences" (quote from R21, R19), and one discussed the greater effectiveness of an integrated grammar and writing method:

> Grade nine was the only year in which I received extensive grammar instruction. It was taught primarily by rote memorization. I learned a great deal but many students did not. Some grammar, with an emphasis on improving writing skills, was taught in grade 11. This was very beneficial. An important difference between the two grades was that one focused on grammar as a separate unit while the other focused on grammar within the context of writing. The last, I found, was far more effective. (R4)

The three respondents who made neutral comments about the effectiveness of the drill-and-exercise method accepted it as "just something you did" (R28).

(2.) Writing Programs and Instruction

Nineteen respondents (45%) cited some aspect of writing programs and/or writing instruction during their schooling. When respondents discussed these programs or instruction, they were most often referring to their high school education. Four respondents mentioned writing during their elementary school years, five during their junior high years, and 12 during their high school years.

Seven respondents (17%) noted at some point during their schooling that grammar and writing were in some way integrated. Five respondents recalled this integration as an explicit feature of the instruction, with four of the five making positive assessments of this methodology (R4, 19, 37, 38). [The fourth was neutral (R14).] Two respondents indicated that grammatical errors were noted on their written assignments and teachers would go over "trouble spots" (R2, 33).

Seven respondents (17%) referred to writing instruction, if only, in two cases, to lament that teachers did little of it (R24, 26). When they referred to actual instruction in writing, respondents found the instruction to be beneficial; one person referred positively to a teacher whose concern was with students' ideas, not only with proper grammar (R3). Another respondent noted with disapproval that although he did many grammar drills and exercises, he had no writing instruction until he enrolled in university (R15).

Five respondents referred to writing assignments without discussing writing instruction. Three of these five noted specifically and with disapproval that they received no instruction to accompany writing assignments (R1, 7, 40). The following comments illustrate this point:

> Although I started writing essays in grade nine, I did not receive instruction in writing essays until grade eleven. I thought the approach was a big mistake, because I did not feel confident about writing essays until grade twelve. I did not receive formal instruction in grade twelve, but I had a great deal of practice. (R1)

One interesting note about the narrative recollections of the respondents' learning of grammar and writing is that, while many people offered vivid recollections of the methods by which grammar was presented to them, their recollections about the actual details of writing instruction were extremely vague. While some respondents recalled having enjoyed creative writing assignments, writing stories, or simply "excellent" writing assignments, no one offered specific details of methods of instruction in this area.

(3.) Grammar Instruction in Foreign Language Classes

Four respondents (10%) cited grammar instruction in foreign language classes; none of these mentioned writing in this connection (R6, 21, 36, 43). Three of the four cited drill-and-exercise as the method employed, and one respondent highlighted a frequent lament of foreign language teachers:

> ...our high school French teacher would sigh and shake his head at the ignorance of the entire class when we failed to understand grammatical terms EVEN when he translated them into our mother tongue. I remember thinking that we were taught more "English grammar" in French class than anything else. (R36)

(4.) Reading

Though none of the respondents cited reading as a curriculum-based method of learning grammar or writing, four respondents (10%) attributed their writing skill to "voracious" reading (R22). Two of the comments were especially strong and generalized that reading ought to be a major factor in grammar and writing instruction:

> I really feel that I learned how to write through my extensive reading as a child and adolescent and my education must be continuous as I continue to read avidly! I feel I "learned" my grammar through an "osmosis" of sorts. While doing very mediocrely (sp?!) on grammar as such, I was in the 99 or 97 percentile in the reading and comprehension exams all grade eights were given....I do hope to emphasize reading and writing in the classroom as a means of learning how to write well. (R17)

> I learned most of my grammar on my own, through reading. Exposure to good writing is probably the best way to learn how to write; that's how I learnt. To this day, I can't label grammatical constructions, but I know when something looks wrong. (R40)

(5.) Personal Influences

Two respondents (5%) indicated home circumstances which influenced them as learners of grammar and writing. One cited parental expectations about correct speech: "My mother points out any grammatical mistakes I make to this day" (R39). The other wrote that an important factor for her was the lack of a television set in the house until she was ten, and her viewing was severely restricted until she was fifteen (R22).

Two other respondents (5%) cited independent study of grammar handbooks after secondary school in attempts to make up for their perceived deficiencies in grammatical knowledge and writing skill. One of these believed that he had succeeded because he had raised his grades in university English courses from Cs to As (R35). The other felt that the effort was unsuccessful:

> I have since [after secondary school] studied grammar on my own, from an exercise book, but as before, I usually forget it shortly after learning it. Strange, but grammar just doesn't really seem to "take" with me. (R23)

5. Relative Difficulty or Ease of Learning Grammar

The respondents were asked to assess the relative difficulty or ease with which they learned grammar. On a scale of 1 (very difficult) to 4 (very easy), the average of the responses was 3.0. The results of the question are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. -- Ease or Difficulty of Learning Grammar (N=44)

Category	Respondents No.	Respondents %
Very difficult (1)	1	2
Moderately difficult (2)	10	23
Moderately easy (3)	21	48
Very easy (4)	12	27

When asked to explain why grammar was a difficult or easy subject to learn, the comments from the respondents who had difficulty were less varied than the comments of those who had little or no difficulty. The only respondent who indicated having had a "very difficult (1)" time learning grammar cited a physical disability which made mapping and diagramming sentences a problem. Of the ten respondents who answered "moderately difficult (2)," five attributed this to a difficulty remembering terminology, rules, the numerous exceptions to rules, or the "math-like" logic of grammar, all of which imply that they were taught grammar in a drill-and-exercise method. Two respondents faulted teachers or their methodology, and one cited boredom as the cause of her difficulty. Two respondents left the question unanswered.

The 33 respondents who felt that learning grammar was "moderately easy (3)" or "very easy (4)" offered varied reasons for this relative ease. Four respondents seemed not to have reasons; they wrote that it "was just easy." Seven people attributed this ease of learning to good teachers, though some did not encounter these good teachers until university or until they had suffered from other teachers. Seven respondents cited their extensive reading as the major cause of their ease in learning grammar. Five felt that grammar was logical and straightforward and therefore easy to learn (unlike the respondent mentioned above who found it difficult for the same reason). Four respondents noted that it was easy to learn because very little was required of them: grammar was either not emphasized or the teachers' expectations were minimal. Another wrote in a similar vein that it was easy for him because he wrote the test and then forgot about it. Two others cited their general interest in and enjoyment of language arts classes. Two respondents cited their good backgrounds without mentioning specific teachers; one said that she had a good background from elementary school, while the other noted that his knowledge was reinforced from much practice. One respondent felt that his parents' concern for good grammar had helped him to learn it. One respondent, who chose the "moderately easy" category, made an important distinction that grammar was "easy to learn but difficult to remember," which perhaps would place him with the respondents who chose the category "moderately difficult" because they found it difficult to remember. Two respondents did not respond.

The respondents were asked to assess the relative ease with which their peers learned grammar on a scale of "1 (very difficult)" to "4 (very easy)," the results of which are summarized in Table 5. The 42 responses to this question averaged 2.2, indicating that the respondents believed that their peers had more difficulty learning grammar than they did.

Table 5. -- Assessments of How Easily Peers Learned Grammar (N=42)

Category	Respondents	
	No.	%
Very difficult (1)	0	0
Moderately difficult (2)	32	76
Moderately easy (3)	10	24
Very easy (4)	0	0

6. Emphasis of Grammar Instruction at Various Grade Levels

Forty-two people responded to Question 4: "At what grade level(s), if any, should grammar be emphasized?" The respondents were offered a selection of Primary, Upper Elementary, Junior High, and Senior High. Thirteen people checked off all four elementary and secondary levels, 14 people checked three levels, 12 people checked two levels, and three people checked one level. The results are summarized by individual levels in Table 6 and by groupings of levels in Table 7.

Table 6. -- Grade Level(s) for Grammar Emphasis (Individual Levels) (N=42)

Grade Level	Respondents	
	No.	%
Primary	19	45
Upper elementary	37	88
Junior high	37	88
Senior high	25	60

Table 7. -- Grade Level(s) for Grammar Emphasis (Groupings of Levels) (N=42)

Grouping of Levels	Respondents No.	%
All levels:		
Primary, upper elementary, junior high, senior high	13	31
Three levels:		
Primary, upper elementary, junior high	4	10
Primary, junior high, senior high	1	2
Upper elementary, junior high, senior high	9	21
Two levels:		
Primary, upper elementary	1	2
Upper elementary, junior high	9	21
Junior high, senior high	2	5
One level:		
Upper elementary	1	2
Junior high	2	5

In question 5, respondents indicated whether they would have preferred to have had more, less, or the same amount of grammar instruction in school. If they wanted more or less instruction, they indicated at which of the four level(s). Overall, 32 respondents wanted more grammar instruction at least at one level of their schooling; of these, two respondents wanted to have had more grammar instruction at all four levels, one wanted more at three levels, six wanted more at two levels, and two wrote in "university," which had not been included as an option. Two respondents would have preferred less grammar instruction at one level, and five respondents were satisfied with the amount of grammar instruction they received, although one indicated that, while the overall amount of instruction was satisfactory, she would have liked to have had it at different ages. One of the five also noted that he had been in schools during the 1950s and 1960s, when there was a much heavier emphasis on grammar than there currently is (R39). One respondent indicated that he would have preferred to have had a whole language approach to instruction throughout his schooling. A summary of the levels at which respondents wanted to have had more or less grammar instruction follows in Table 8.

Table 8. -- Grade Levels of Respondents' Preferred Grammar Instruction (N=40)

Level	Amount of Grammar Instruction Preferred	Respondents N	Respondents %
Primary	More	4	10
	Less	0	0
Upper elementary	More	9	23
	Less	1	3
Junior high	More	14	35
	Less	1	3
Senior high	More	14	35
	Less	0	0

7. Factors Shaping Attitudes

In Question 6, respondents were asked to cite the factors which have shaped their attitudes toward grammar and writing. Of the 41 responses to this question, 22 respondents (54%) stated that they enjoyed language arts in various forms: 10 of the 22 enjoyed writing; eight appreciated language, linguistics, or communication; and four enjoyed reading. Of the 14 references (34%) citing the quality of teachers, 10 noted teachers who encouraged good writing and/or good grammatical skills. Other factors contributing to generally positive attitudes were good experiences in school (2 citations) and parents who encouraged good grammar and/or an interest in language (3 citations).

Four respondents noted a split in their attitudes toward grammar and writing: three had a "natural" sense of their own good writing but were either unconfident or unconcerned about their knowledge of grammatical terminology, and one respondent did not like writing but was quite confident about his knowledge of grammar. Two other respondents wrote that they revised their ideas about the importance of grammar instruction in school after they encountered students with extremely poor writing abilities in the university writing clinic or in their student teaching experience. Their revised opinion was that knowledge of grammar was more essential than they had previously believed.

Citing factors which contributed to negative attitudes toward learning grammar, four respondents noted teachers who seemed not to understand grammar or who disliked teaching it. Five respondents felt their own lack of expertise in grammar or writing because they had too little instruction; they wanted a greater emphasis on these areas to save others from learning "the hard way." Confusion, frustration, and/or boredom accounted for three respondents' negative attitudes toward grammar and writing.

Knowledge of foreign languages was cited as a contributing factor by three respondents; two of these felt that grammatical knowledge is necessary for learning or teaching a foreign language, while the other person declared that grammar study can interfere with comprehension of second language students.

8. Revision of Writing

In Question 9 respondents were asked whether they do their own revising and editing to their writing. Of the 44 responses given, most (75%) indicated that respondents revised and edited their own work alone or used a second reader only as a final double-check (33 citations). Eight respondents (18%) relied primarily upon someone else to do their revisions, and three (7%) relied equally upon themselves and another reader.

Most respondents (68%) used a handbook for reference while writing (30 citations). Ten respondents (23%) stated that they did not use any reference handbook, and four (9%) noted occasional use of one. The most commonly-cited reference books were Canadian Writers' Handbook (9 citations) and The Bare Essentials (2 citations). Those who used handbooks most commonly cited footnote and bibliographic formats as their purpose (5 citations), with punctuation (4 citations), grammar (4 citations), and proper usage (4 citations) also mentioned.

9. Discussion

The overall impression created by the responses to this section of the questionnaire was one of dissatisfaction and unease about the grammar instruction these respondents received during their schooling. They wanted to have had more of it, especially at the junior high and high school levels; while stating approval of the writing instruction they received, they also believed that they had not received enough of it. A certain amount of this desire to have had more instruction, at least in grammar, may be attributable to the immediate circumstances of these particular respondents: they were in the middle of their professional term of student teaching and were likely feeling in need of any additional background that might have been possible. Nevertheless, the dominance of this impression in their responses, coupled with the ambivalence and inappropriate elements of their definitions of grammar, clearly indicated a feeling of inadequacy about their backgrounds in grammar and writing instruction.

The over-30 age group found grammar to have been slightly more difficult to learn (2.3) than did the younger group (3.1), but they felt that they had retained slightly more of their instruction.

The post-degree respondents seemed to have learned grammar more independently than the pre-degree group, which was not always a positive experience for them. Two noted their extensive reading as a major factor in their learning of grammar; four others noted faults in the instruction or lack of instruction they received but learned grammar on their own, by trial and error or by a natural sense in their writing.

D. Student Teaching Experiences

Of the 44 respondents to the questionnaire, 22 (50%) taught one or more grammatical concepts during the first four-week round of their student teaching experiences. The questionnaire was administered during the three-week on-campus session between the two rounds of student teaching, so the experiences referred to by these student teachers would have been gained in junior high schools. The second four-week round of student teaching, which followed the on-campus session, would have been spent at high schools. All 22 responded to each question in this section of the questionnaire.

Respondents were asked in two questions (Section D, Questions 13 and 14) for their comments concerning this grammar teaching and for details of these lessons (content, formats, materials, structure, effectiveness). The comments from the two questions tended to overlap, so they will be reported together and discussed in terms of comments about the concepts they taught, the methods and materials they used, and assessments of their effectiveness.

1. Concepts Taught

Of those respondents who taught grammar lessons during their student teaching, most (12) taught lessons concerning the parts of speech. Table 9 details the concepts which were taught:

Table 9. -- Grammar Concepts Taught During Student Teaching (N=22)

Concept	Respondents No.	%
Parts of speech	12	55
Clauses	5	23
Verbs (Tense, Phrases, Transitive/Intransitive)	5	23
Agreement (Subject-Verb, Pronoun-Antecedent)	4	18
Misplaced Modifiers	3	14
Active/Passive Voice	2	9
French Grammar (Subjunctive, Reflexive Verbs, Negation)	2	9
Possessives	2	9
Punctuation (Commas, Apostrophes)	2	9
Appositives	1	5
Phrases (Noun, Adjective, Adverb)	1	5
Synonyms and Homonyms	1	5
Word Pairs (Who/Whom)	1	5

2. Methods and Materials

a. Methods

In detailing the methods they employed to teach grammar, respondents reported an overwhelming reliance upon the drill-and-exercise method, with 19 (86%) of the 22 student teachers using it to some degree. (See Table 10.) Of the remaining three respondents, one did not indicate any method used, one used sentence-combining exercises, and one taught French grammar from a textbook which had exercises requiring one-sentence answers. The respondents were not asked whether they had chosen the formats for these grammar lessons.

Table 10. -- Emphasis and Methods Used in Teaching Grammar Concepts (N=22)

Emphasis and Method	Respondents No.	%
Exclusive-Use Methods		
Drill and Exercise	12	55
Sentence-Combining Exercises	1	5
Primary-Use Methods		
Drill and Exercise	4	18
Student Writing as Focus	2	9
Supplementary-Use Methods		
Drill and Exercise	3	14
Literature	3	14
Original Exercises	1	5

Of the 19 respondents who used the drill-and-exercise method, 12 used it exclusively. Students were expected to take notes from the student teacher's explanation and examples of the concept, do worksheet exercises in class or for homework, correct their exercises, and take a test or quiz. The following quotation typifies these 12 responses:

> Most of the instruction was for a full class. I started out using overheads complete with notes and examples. I found the notes to be very useful but I eventually used my own examples on the board. The pattern went something like this: I would explain the concept on the board. I would then present the notes on the overhead (these are not my own notes). I would do some analytical examples with the students and then they would do their own exercises. We would correct them and then continue with the next concept. (R1)

Of the seven others who used the drill-and-exercise method along with another method, four relied primarily upon drill and exercise and used another strategy as a supplement. This procedure is illustrated in the following quotation:

> I basically followed the outline set forth by the textbook Patterns of Communicating. Most of the time the exercises were either done as a whole class or as individuals. I also devised my own writing exercises. (R5)

Three of the 19 respondents who used drill and exercise as a method did not use it as their primary method. Two people used students' writing as a focus:

> After marking a set of paragraphs, I found the areas where many students (gr.7) were having problems. Two of these areas were apostrophes and homonyms. I asked a class how and when to use an apostrophe and after they explained its use to me, I re-explained it to them. They were given a worksheet on filling in apostrophes as a follow-up activity. For the lesson on homonyms, I used examples of students'incorrect work and had them correct the errors. Before doing this, we listed examples of homonyms and what they mean on the board. (R41)

> I used the Composition Series textbook occasionally, but mainly I derived exercises from their paragraphs. They would have to see me individually for further instruction on correcting their own paragraphs as well. I avoided over-using terms such as "appositive," "gerund," or prepositional phrase when possible, choosing instead to stress logic. Make sense, I told them. They tried quite hard and the results were encouraging. (R43)

One respondent used worksheet exercises as merely one of many strategies employed. This respondent was also the only one who could be called creative or inventive in his approach to teaching grammar, for his use of photos, props, and a pre- and post-test. His response showed noteworthy and, among these respondents, uncommon versatility and perseverance:

> I tried as much variety as I could. I gave oral notes and did exercises from the textbook and worksheets. I used newspaper articles and pictures as examples. I used an apple when we discussed adjectives and I had several students eat parts of the apple for adverb study. I lectured from the overhead and the chalkboard. I gave a descriptive writing assignment and used a nonsense poem to clarify the limits for identifying word classes. I gave a pre-test and a post-test and my conclusions are that those who did well on the pre-test also did well on the post-test and those who didn't do well on the pre-test didn't care to improve their marks on the post-test. The use of the apple was very helpful for adjective and adverbs. For the difference between transitive and intransitive verbs, I used a picture of Gretzky playing hockey with the Oilers and they remembered that. But I don't really think the entire unit was that helpful to these grade 9 students. (R27)

Other than the drill-and-exercise method, methods used by the student teachers were the use of student writing for identification of common writing weaknesses (4 citations), the use of literature in some way (3 citations), and sentence-combining exercises (1 citation). The respondent who did the sentence-combining exercises was counted among those who used literature, but the literature seemed merely a vehicle for the exercises:

> [The grammar was taught] quickly, in conjunction with a story, to grade 8s who had previous experience. Students had sentences in book. They had to combine two sentences as one, as the second sentence modified the first and could be shortened and connected as an adj or adv clause. (R25)

The procedure established by the student teachers for teaching grammar lessons was almost invariably a full-class, teacher-centered approach, used by all 22 respondents. In this procedure, the student teacher introduced the topic, led discussion or recitation of that topic, assigned exercises, and presided over the correction of the exercises. Two of the teachers reported having given individual help to students as they did their assigned exercises.

After having taught one grammatical concept in a full-class structure, one student teacher also used a group-based procedure for additional grammar instruction:

> ...The adjective lesson was done in groups. Each group had a different handout to do and then share and explain to the rest of the class. Before groups were established, examples were given on the blackboard. (R29)

One student teacher believed that group work was unsuitable in her situation of teaching French grammar:

> I taught the entire class, using textbooks. Students responded by completing exercises, nearly all of which required one-sentence answers. Considering that the grammatical aspect of a foreign language is a major part of language-learning, it is necessary to teach the whole class at once. Small group or individual instruction is almost pointless since it would be far too time-consuming. (R33)

b. Materials

Only two respondents evaluated the textbooks they were using. One was hindered by a workbook which had incorrect answers in it (R3); the other used Patterns of Communicating and was satisfied that it offered good exercises that the students found easy to complete. Several others who taught by a drill-and-exercise method used Patterns of Communicating, which was later de-listed in the 1987 curriculum guide.

Of the 22 student teachers, only three could be said to have devised any of their own material for teaching grammar. The most obviously inventive was Respondent 27, quoted above, who used pictures and props. One respondent devised her own writing exercises (R5). The third taught the concept of nouns to non-native English-speakers by identifying common objects in the classroom as nouns and progress-ing to examples of ideas that are nouns (R40).

3. Assessments of Their Effectiveness

Although not specifically asked to do so, some respondents commented upon their lessons in terms of their own feelings of adequacy. The most common statement regarding the respondents' assessments of themselves as grammar teachers was that they were not sufficiently confident about their knowledge of grammar to teach it. This lack of confidence was sometimes due to a need to "brush up" on material that they had once learned (3 citations). This feeling was evident in the following comments:

> Some of them [the grammar concepts] were difficult because I had been away from sentence structure for so long. I had to do a bit of background reading. (R3)
>
> Although I found them [the concepts] easy to teach, I had to make quite an effort to refamiliarize myself with the concepts in the textbook. (R5)

For three respondents, the lack of confidence stemmed from a lack of knowledge rather than just a need to refresh previously learned concepts. The following quotations illustrate this point:

> [Teaching the concepts was] fairly easy, but I lack confidence in teaching them. My subject knowledge is not great. (R8)
>
> ...the concept of linking verbs is not an easy one to grasp, or I should say, that I have problems with them. (R44)

Two respondents reported their confidence in teaching the grammar concepts because of their subject knowledge:

> I found the concept easy to teach because I was confident in my knowledge of the adjective. The adjective is a very straightforward term. (R26)

Two respondents noted the difficulty of dealing with students' questions about exceptions to grammar rules:

> While the concept itself was easy to teach, I found myself unprepared for the "exceptions" to the rules I was teaching. (R1)

> [The concepts were] not difficult to explain or "teach," simply the answering of the thousand questions that came afterward, and trying to weed through questions that are exceptions to the "rule." (R2)

Five respondents felt that the students understood the grammar concepts well. All of these were teaching lessons on the parts of speech, and one increased the difficulty of her lessons after realizing that they were beneath the level of the class (R19).

One respondent was troubled by the students' lack of understanding of parts of speech and regarded her uncertainty about their background in formal grammar instruction as a problem (R22).

Respondents were concerned about their effectiveness in terms of their students' responses and attitudes. Five student teachers, three of whom relied exclusively or almost exclusively on the drill-and-exercise method, reported that their students were bored with the lessons. Three respondents noted the students' difficulty in learning or retaining the information, and three cited the students' intransigent attitudes as a problem. The following quotations illustrate these points and indicate some of the frustration felt by these student teachers:

> I found adverbs difficult to teach because most of the students had memorized the rule of the "ly" endings. The students could not go beyond that and learn their function....I felt that the lessons went "okay," but I had a hard time changing bad attitudes about grammar. (R15)

> They [the concepts] were easy because I understood them. They were hard to teach because they seemed very boring. I think the students already knew most of it or they didn't know any of it. They had already had their conceptions of grammar solidified. (R27)

> I found these concepts difficult to teach for a number of

> reasons....I soon learned that some (many) students find grammatical concepts extremely difficult to learn and use effectively....I was constantly required to explain the "usefulness" of such concepts. (R37)

One respondent noted a difficulty pertaining to foreign-language instruction: the students translated and attempted to apply French concepts in English. When the concepts did not have an English equivalent, the students were baffled (R33).

Overall, of the 22 student teachers, nine (41%) indicated general satisfaction with their effectiveness in teaching grammar, while seven (32%) were to some extent frustrated or dissatisfied, and six (27%) were either neutral or mixed-evaluation (satisfied with their teaching of one concept and dissatified with their teaching of another, for example). One of these six made the distinction between understanding and attitude: her students understood the material easily enough but were bored and restless from the routine (R28).

Of the nine respondents who were generally satisfied with the effectiveness of their grammar teaching, six relied exclusively or primarily upon a drill-and-exercise method; one used sentence-combining exercises; one used a group rather than full-class procedure; and one relied on exercises derived from the students' writing.

Of the seven generally dissatisfied respondents, five relied exclusively upon a drill-and-exercise method; one used classroom surroundings to teach her ESL students about nouns; and the other was Respondent 27, who used a variety of approaches. His administration of a pre- and post-test gave him fairly concrete evidence that his teaching had not been especially effective, despite his willingness to try different approaches.

4. Discussion

Although the six respondents who had taken no linguistics or language study courses were slightly less confident (2.2, as compared to 2.6 on a 4-point scale for the rest of the respondents) about teaching grammar, the three of the six who did some grammar teaching during their student teaching were satisfied that the lessons had gone well. Two of the three relied exclusively on the text for their lessons, with one noting that the routine was boring for the students, and the third focused upon the students' writing and did not use traditional grammar terminology when it was avoidable.

E. Intentions for Teaching Grammar

In the final section of the questionnaire (Section E, Questions 15 to 18), respondents were asked about their intentions for and confidence in teaching grammar within their own classrooms. They identified aspects of grammatical knowledge which they considered to be essential, desirable, or not important for students to master before the completion of grade 12; rated their intended emphasis upon grammar within the language arts program as high, medium, or low; explained in a short narrative how they intended to teach grammar; and rated and explained their confidence or lack thereof in teaching grammar.

1. Emphasis upon Grammar Instruction

a. Rating of General Emphasis

When asked to rate the emphasis they intended to place upon grammar instruction in the language arts program, given options of "high, medium, or low," the majority of respondents placed themselves in the "medium" category. Three people created a fourth category by writing in "medium high." The results of these responses are summarized in Table 11.

Table 11. -- Intended Emphasis upon Grammar Instruction (N=42)

Category	Respondents No.	 %
High	9	21
Medium high	3	7
Medium	28	67
Low	2	5

b. Rating of Essential Aspects of Grammar Mastery

When given a list of 23 concepts in grammar study (plus an "others" category) and asked to identify each as either "essential, desirable, or not important" for a student to master before leaving grade 12, the majority of respondents regarded 16 of the 23 concepts as "essential." None of the 23 were rated as being "not important" by more than seven of the respondents. Table 12 summarizes the responses categories for each of the 23 concepts. (For each concept, the percentage is based upon the total number of respondents who indicated a rating for that category.)

Table 12. -- Concepts Regarded as "Essential," "Desirable" or "Not Important" for Grade 12 Students to Have Mastered

Concept	"Essential"		"Desirable"		"Not Important"	
	No.	(%)	No.	(%)	No.	(%)
Parts of Speech	30	(73)	10	(24)	1	(2)
Agreement of subjects/verbs	39	(95)	2	(05)	0	(0)
Predicate nominatives (nouns)	21	(55)	15	(39)	2	(5)
Coordination/subordination	17	(50)	17	(50)	0	(0)
Writing complete sentences	40	(98)	1	(02)	0	(0)
Parallel structure	18	(47)	20	(53)	0	(0)
Independent/dependent clauses	22	(55)	17	(43)	1	(3)
Linking verbs (copulative)	17	(46)	19	(51)	1	(3)
Possessives	29	(71)	12	(29)	0	(0)
Types of conjunctions	20	(50)	19	(48)	1	(3)
Avoidance of double negatives	27	(66)	14	(34)	0	(0)
Verb tenses	36	(88)	5	(12)	0	(0)
Parts of a sentence	24	(60)	14	(35)	2	(5)
Noun cases (declensions)	10	(33)	15	(50)	5	(17)
Agreement of pronouns/ antecedents	28	(70)	12	(30)	0	(0)
Appositives	7	(24)	19	(66)	3	(10)
Correct pronoun usage	34	(83)	7	(17)	0	(0)
Subjunctive mood	7	(23)	17	(57)	6	(20)
Gerund, participle, and infinitive phrases	12	(32)	18	(49)	7	(19)
Dangling modifiers	24	(62)	12	(31)	3	(8)
Avoidance of split infinitive	14	(38)	17	(46)	6	(16)
Active/passive voice	23	(56)	17	(41)	1	(2)
Transitive/intransitive verbs	19	(49)	17	(44)	3	(8)

In addition to the 23 concepts listed above, three others were added in the "Others" category. "Semantics" and "Word Usage" were each rated as "essential" by one respondent (R33, 34); "History of the language" was rated as "desirable" by one respondent (R6).

The responses were also tallied according to individual respondents, with a focus upon those who rated themselves as intending either a "high" or "low" emphasis upon grammar instruction in their classrooms. When only the "essential" category of grammar concepts was considered, there was little consistency among the respondents, but when the "essential" and "desirable" categories were considered together, the "high" emphasis respondents' totals were very consistent with each other. Table 13 summarizes these profiles.

Table 13. -- Tallies of "Essential" and "Desirable" Categories for Respondents with "High" and "Low" Grammar Emphasis

Self-Rating for Grammar Emphasis	Respondent Number	# "Essential" Concepts	# "Desirable" Concepts
High	4	23	0
	5	17	2
	10	23	0
	11	12	11
	15	10	12
	16	13	8
	22	23	0
	25	11	9
	42	14	7
Low	13	0	0
	17	12	2

2. Intentions for Teaching Grammar

Forty-two respondents indicated with varying degrees of specificity how they intended to teach grammar within their own classrooms. A majority (74%) planned to integrate grammar in some way with other aspects of their language arts programs (31 citations). Of these 31, 10 either stated that they would integrate grammar "completely" within their programs or simply stated an intention to integrate it. The following two quotations illustrate each type of statement:

> ...I would like to teach grammar in a whole language approach and integrated in a whole program. (R13)
>
> ...for the most part, I intend to teach grammar throughout the year, as problems arise and as it fits into the lesson. (R6)

Twenty respondents (48%) specifically stated their intentions to integrate grammar with composition in their classrooms; four people (10%) intended to integrate it with literature; and two (5%) intended to integrate it with speaking skills.

An intention to teach grammar in separate lessons or units was also a common response, with 26% favouring it (11 citations). All 11 of these respondents also intended to integrate it in some way in their language arts programs. The quotations below illustrate this intention:

> I think at least one day a week should be set aside for grammar and tied in with the work we were doing that week. Many worksheets and practice sheets should be included. (R29)
>
> I would like to integrate grammar into all areas of my L.A. program as well as to spend time solely on it. (R38)

Three other methods or approaches to grammar teaching were also mentioned. A sentence-combining program, a focus upon semantics, and peer editing each received one citation.

Eight respondents indicated some ambivalence or uncertainty about their intentions. Of these, two stated that they had no ideas about how to teach grammar. Two indicated a desire to rely upon "good" textbooks because of their own uncertainty:

> ...hopefully with plenty of guidance and good texts since I do not feel highly confident (I do feel that practice is essential as well as feedback for the students.) (R10)
>
> I hope to make use of some excellent grammar texts and keep in mind that the acquisition of good grammar skills takes a lot of time and much practice. (R39)

One respondent discussed her search for an answer that she could trust:

> I would like to teach it as the students require it (integral approach, in other words). I have yet to find out for myself if this is feasible. I have seen an interesting slide/tape program called "Who's Afraid of Grammar?" that would be worth investigating. (R36)

In response to the question, "How do you intend to teach grammar, two other respondents indicated their attitudes very directly:

> With fear and trembling. (R8)
>
> Good question. Often and consistently, simply and enthusiastically, hopefully and patiently. (R25)

The ambivalence and uncertainty which was expressed explicitly by these eight respondents was also echoed by other respondents who indicated at least a general intention for their grammar instruction. This uncertainty was often stated in other sections of the questionnaires--in the narrative recollections of their grammar instruction or in the question which asked what factors contributed toward their attitudes toward grammar and writing. Quotations from two respondents will illustrate this confusion.

> I don't know how instruction could be geared to compensate for this fact [that grammar instruction doesn't seem to "stick" in the minds of adolescents]. In reflecting upon my own experience, I don't think that grammar has been very memorably presented to me. I am at a loss to devise a very lively method of grammar presentation myself. (R5)
>
> [After commenting upon the deficits in her own instruction] ... I trust that there is more attention being given to the area of grammar in school now and that newer ways of teaching it are being used....I do not know how to teach it yet but I will incorporate it continually throughout the literature we study -- for repetition which will help the students remember it and master it. (R34)

3. Confidence

Respondents were asked to rate their confidence in teaching grammar and to indicate aspects of grammar instruction of which they were especially confident and unconfident. The responses to these questions are summarized in Tables 14 and 15.

a. Rating of Self-Confidence

Given a scale of "1 (highly insecure)" to "4 (highly confident)," the respondents as a group rated in the middle of the scale for confidence in teaching grammar, with an overall average of 2.5. Though given only whole integers as options, several respondents indicated decimal figures, as shown in Table 14:

Table 14. -- Ratings of Confidence in Teaching Grammar (N=43)

Rating	Respondents No.	%
Highly Insecure (1)	4	9
Somewhat Insecure (2)	14	33
(Mid-range write-in) (2.5)	3	7
Somewhat Confident (3)	17	40
(Mid-range write-in) (3.5)	2	5
Highly Confident (4)	3	7

b. Areas of Confidence and Insecurity

When asked to identify aspects of grammar instruction about which they were especially confident or insecure teaching, many respondents apparently referred back to an earlier question (E15), in which a list of 24 grammatical concepts were listed. Some used that earlier question to detail concepts of which they were confident or insecure teaching by noting that they were insecure of all the concepts they had earlier labelled "not important" in Question E15.

Some respondents were confident about teaching "everything" or "almost everything" (5 citations), while others were insecure about "everything" or "almost everything" (8 citations). Four respondents declared absolutely that they were confident about "none." The most commonly-listed concepts are summarized in Table 15.

Table 15. -- Commonly-Listed Areas of Confidence and Insecurity in Grammar Instruction (N=44)

Attitude	Concept	Respondents No.	%
Confidence:			
	Sentence Structure	16	36
	Parts of Speech	14	32
	Verb Tenses	6	14
	Everything or Almost Everything	5	11
Insecurity:			
	Everything or Almost Everything	8	18
	Gerunds and Participles	7	16
	Phrases and Clauses	5	11

4. Discussion

The five respondents who were bilingual or did not have English as a native language did not differ from their colleagues in terms of the methods by which they learned grammar in school, or their assessment of how much grammatical knowledge they retained, though they found learning it to be slightly less difficult than did the unilingual English group of respondents (3.2 for the non-English or bilingual group and 2.9 for the English group). They were slightly more confident (3.0, compared to 2.5) about teaching grammar. A significant difference between this subgroup and the unilingual respondents was that four of the five (80%) of those with a non-English language in their backgrounds intended to give grammar a "high" emphasis in their classrooms, while only 12% of the uni-lingual English speakers intended to. Overall, 21% of all respondents intended to have a "high" degree of emphasis on grammar. The intentions of the bilingual and non-English native speakers concerning methodology for teaching grammar did not differ from those of the group as a whole.

A subgroup of three respondents had taken neither a writing nor a linguistics/language study course at university. These three respondents' confidence in teaching grammar was somewhat lower than that of the entire group (2.0, as compared to 2.6 for the others), but their intentions for teaching it were much the same as those of the larger group.

Based upon the overall tone and details of their narrative recollections of learning grammar, respondents were categorized as having had positive, negative, or neutral experiences. The positive and negative experiences groups were compared in terms of their confidence and their intentions with regard to emphasis on grammar instruction. Six respondents were considered to have had generally positive experiences, and nine respondents were considered to have had negative experiences. The positive experiences group was more confident about teaching grammar (3.0) than the negative experiences group (2.3), as well as planning to emphasize it more in their classrooms (two high emphasis and four medium for the positive group; one high, six medium, one low, and one no-response for the negative experiences group).

Respondents who taught grammar lessons during their student teaching rounds were slightly more confident about teaching it than were their colleagues who had had no experience teaching it (2.8 for those who taught grammar lessons, as compared to 2.3 for those who did not).

In stating their intentions for teaching grammar in their own classrooms, eight respondents were to some extent ambivalent or uncertain and two offered no answer. Of these ten respondents, six were in the group which did not teach any grammar lessons, and four taught some grammar during their student teaching.

Only two respondents intended to place a "low" emphasis upon grammar in their classrooms (Rs 13, 17). These two respondents had similar backgrounds as students of grammar. They both had very negative experiences learning it in school, citing either a physical disability (R13) or a "mental block" (R17) as impediments to their comprehension. Both offered limited definitions of grammar: one stated that the word "grammar" meant little to her, while the other limited her definition to the parts of speech. Both felt that their peers had had an easier time learning grammar than they did, which was a highly unusual response among the respondents, and they had a "very difficult" or "moderately difficult" time learning grammar in school. Both received grammar instruction in periods of formal grammar instruction but without reference to their writing, reading, or speaking. One also received grammar instruction during foreign language classes. Both had already earned B.A. degrees, with strong backgrounds in literature but no coursework in writing. Neither one had had very much grammar study at university. Neither respondent taught any grammar lesssons during the first student teaching round, and both had "very little" confidence about teaching it, saying that they were insecure about teaching most grammatical concepts. Both believed that grammar ought to be emphasized throughout elementary and secondary schooling in a whole language approach, without formal grammar lessons.

Of the nine respondents who planned to place a "high" emphasis upon grammar in their classrooms, six had fairly negative experiences learning grammar during their own schooling. These six seemed to be determined to compensate their students for the lack that they perceived in their own schooling, but they seemed uncertain about how to improve the instruction. While they felt that grammar study was boring, confusing, or just didn't "stick" with them, they were inclined to stress an integration with composition in order to make grammar relevant and sensible to students. Of the three respondents who were generally pleased with their grammar instruction, two had had traditional drill-and-exercise instruction with teachers whom they praised. The third had had experience both with isolated drills and exercises and with an integrated grammar and writing program. She favoured the latter. One respondent intended to teach grammar with a drill-and-exercise orientation, as she felt that that had worked well for her. The other two were more inclined to link grammar with composition.

In summary, the overwhelming majority of the 44 respondents reported that they had been taught grammar by the traditional drill-and-exercise method. Half of the respondents (22) had some experience in grammar instruction during their junior high school round of student teaching. Of these 22 respondents, most (19) relied exclusively or to some extent upon the drill-and-exercise method. When asked about their intentions for teaching grammar in their own classrooms, however, the majority of the respondents indicated an intention to integrate grammar instruction with their writing programs. For most of them, this intention, if followed, would represent a complete or near-complete break with their experiences as students and student teachers.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Summary

1. The Study

A voluntary questionnaire was distributed to the Term II 1986 secondary language arts student teachers in order to survey their experiences and attitudes concerning the learning and teaching of grammar. They were asked for their recollections and evaluations of the grammar and writing instruction they received as students, as well as their intentions for teaching grammar and writing as professional teachers. Those who had already taught grammar lessons as student teachers were also asked to describe and evaluate those lessons. The purpose of this survey was to explore the experiences and intentions of future language arts teachers concerning their learning and teaching of grammar, and, by so doing, to gain some insight into the probable trend of grammar instruction in Alberta in the coming years.

The questionnaire included questions both of a narrative and a quantifiable nature, in order to allow respondents to describe their experiences in a personal manner as well as to allow some comparison and grouping of the responses. It also elicited background information, such as age, native language, and education, which may have had some bearing upon their experiences.

2. Respondents' Recollections of Grammar and Writing Instruction

Despite a variety of cultural and educational backgrounds, the respondents were almost all taught grammar by the traditional drill-and-exercise method. The degree of emphasis varied, but 40 of the 44 respondents (91%) had recollections of periods of formal grammar drills at some phase of their schooling. Their attitudes toward this instruction were mixed but generally negative. Most remembered the tedium, though some felt it was worthwhile, and many wrote of individual teachers who were memorable for various reasons. The 17% of respondents whose grammar instruction had been integrated with writing instruction at some phase of their schooling regarded that as more effective instruction than the drill and exercise method. Four respondents believed that they had learned grammar through reading; these individuals intended to focus upon teaching grammar through encouraging reading.

3. Respondents' Experiences as Student Teachers

Twenty-two of the 44 respondents had taught grammar lessons as student teachers. Of the 22, 86% taught grammar by the drill-and-exercise method, with most relying upon it exclusively. A few focused upon student writing or sentence-combining exercises for grammar lessons, and one tried an impressive variety of methods and strategies. The majority taught lessons concerning identification of parts of speech. Their evaluations of these lessons were mixed, but even those who were generally satisfied with their lessons noted that student boredom or ingrained negative attitudes were problems. Three of the 22 respondents devised their own materials for teaching grammar, while the others relied upon textbooks and/or materials from their cooperating teachers.

4. Respondents' Intentions for Teaching Grammar and Writing

Most respondents (67%) chose the middle ground of a "medium" emphasis upon grammar instruction in their own classrooms. However, 80% of those respondents with a bilingual or non-English native language planned to place a "high" emphasis upon grammar, compared with 12% of the unilingual native English speakers.

The majority (74%) of the respondents indicated their intention to teach grammar integrated with their writing program, with a sizable minority (26%) intending to teach grammar in separate units or lessons as well as integrating it. Others (19%) were ambivalent or uncertain about their intentions.

Respondents whose overall experience of learning grammar had been positive were somewhat more confident about teaching it and planned to emphasize it more than did those whose overall experience of learning grammar had been negative.

Those respondents who had taught grammar lessons as student teachers were somewhat more confident and less ambivalent about their intentions for teaching grammar than were their peers who had not taught grammar lessons, but among those who stated their ideas for methods of grammar instruction, there was no difference in the two groups.

The experiences of the respondents as students and student teachers of grammar were over-whelmingly traditional, to which their responses were mixed--from approval, to grudging acceptance, to bitterness, to confusion and anxiety. There was a sense in their narratives that they wanted to do something better for their students than they had experienced in their own schooling. Their stated intentions were generally in line with current thinking: they wanted to integrate grammar with writing. Yet, there was little if any evidence from their statements that they had a clear understanding of what this integration means or how to go about achieving it.

There was also a sizable percentage (26%) of respondents who intended to teach separate grammar lessons or units in addition to their integrated work. The motivations of these people were varied. Some had appreciated this method of instruction in their own education and felt that it would be of benefit to their students. Some felt deprived because they had not received such instruction; they wanted to give their students "more" than they had had. Since in their own schooling and student teaching, this reference to "separate lessons" meant drill and exercise, one assumes that to be the form these lessons would take in their teaching.

Along with a rather vague sense of interest in integration of grammar with other aspects of the language arts curriculum, a sense of fear and nervousness about the teaching of grammar was also evident. Some respondents who felt competent as writers felt very insecure about their knowledge of grammar; indeed, this insecurity perhaps derived from their competence as writers. These people often noted that their writing was sufficiently competent for them to "get by" in their schooling without much if any explicit knowledge of grammar. They were aware of the distinction between doing well on grammar tests and writing well. As one respondent noted, "Although I've always felt that I have no knowledge of grammar, I seem to get by on my natural sense of what is right or wrong about language usage. I suppose that I'll never completely trust this 'natural sense'"

(R5). This respondent also discussed her difficulty teaching grammar as a student teacher: although she could distinguish between two types of clauses, she could not explain the difference to her students. Her 'natural sense' was sufficient for her own writing but inadequate for her teaching.

While this insecurity about grammatical knowledge affected some of the confident, competent writers, it certainly was a more difficult problem for those who lacked confidence in their own writing. One respondent, who discussed her fear and enjoyment of writing as well as her lack of knowledge of grammar, wrote about her insecurity:

> ...I realize that other people are in the same boat and have not had grammar instruction in university either. I know that being a teacher will help me improve greatly.... I suppose I should be prepared ideally to be at my best before I go into teaching--but that is not the case. It's like saying that someone should know how to be an excellent teacher before one becomes a teacher. In both teaching and grammar study there will always be more room for improvement and growth. That's something to look forward to. (R34)

How should this statement be interpreted? Unquestionably, this respondent is correct in saying that teachers improve with experience; by teaching grammar, one can certainly learn more grammar, or at least learn how to teach it more effectively. However, one must question the notion of teachers learning any important aspect of language arts entirely at the expense of their students. Surely, a teacher should have some degree of proficiency before entering the classroom.

This respondent, like R5 above, most likely had more 'natural sense' about grammar and writing than she gave herself credit for. But is her natural sense sufficient? Would she (and her future students) benefit from making her implicit knowledge explicit? A sports analogy makes the point clearly: an athlete is not necessarily a good teacher of a sport. If a competent writer cannot discuss the intricacies of his writing, he does not lose credibility as a writer; but he is not necessarily competent as a teacher of writing. How much more effective a teacher the competent writer will be if he can discuss his writing in terms that others will understand and be able to incorporate into their own writing.

B. Conclusions

The questionnaire was deliberately designed to highlight the respondents' individuality as much as possible, which resulted in narratives that reflected the respondents' attitudes--of pride, anger, ambivalence, or confidence. This richness, however, makes broad generalizations difficult to draw from this data; the respondents may have been discussing similar experiences or attitudes, but their writing conveyed subtle differences in tone or response. The conclusions to be drawn from this study are discussed in terms of the patterns which are clearly enough drawn by the respondents to merit consideration.

One conclusion is that the degree of the respondents' commitment to integrated grammar and writing instruction may be superficial. Most of the respondents reported negative experiences learning (or not learning) grammar at some phase of their schooling; many did not report any positive experiences to balance the negative ones. They believed at some level--perhaps only because they were told in English education classes or because of their dissatisfaction with their own experiences--that an integrated language arts program is an important goal of language arts education. However, they had little, if any, experience to support this belief. Many had no experience of an integrated composition program, and there was little evidence to suggest that they were likely to encounter such a program in the schools during their practicum experiences. Many student teachers who taught a drill-and-exercise method of grammar instruction were more or less satisfied with it. One wonders how committed these teachers would be to integration.

On a more fundamental level than these uncertainties about grammatical terminology or instruction was a disturbing uncertainty about what grammar is and what is meant by grammar study. Ambivalent definitions, as well as those which included nonstandard elements (spelling, homonyms, and history of the language, for example) were evident. An emphasis upon mastery of rules and correctness as an absolute were two features of many definitions which reveal a lack of understanding of current thought about the nature of grammar study, in which appropriateness of language for situation and purpose is stressed above an absolute standard of "correctness." Rules were often seen as absolutes to be applied, as if the rules were primary to expression, rather than as an explanation of the system of words in a language.

What can be concluded about the status of secondary-school grammar instruction in the immediate future? The picture, given the responses of these respondents, is cause for concern. The overall experiences of the majority of respondents, both as students and as student teachers, had provided no positive model of an integrated language program in school. Their experiences were neutral or negative, with occasional positive highlights for some students, but the overall model of instruction was neither positive nor in accordance with the theoretical stance advocated by language arts educational theorists. Given their lack of experience of a working, integrated model of instruction, their uncertainty about the meaning of grammar, and their vaguely-stated intentions, one wonders about their ability to incorporate integrated instruction effectively into their classrooms. The likelihood seems more that they are in danger of perpetuating a negative and confused situation, in which their nervousness, discomfort, and ambivalence will be transmitted to their students. The maxim that "we teach as we were taught" seems ironically and almost inescapably true even when we disapprove of this teaching.

C. Implications and Recommendations

In considering the implications of this study, one ought first to consider what the goals of a language arts education program should or can be regarding the education of teachers of English language arts. What qualities and attitudes do we hope to encourage and nurture in our language arts teachers? What qualities and attitudes do we expect them, in turn, to foster in their students in elementary and secondary school?

Two competing models of language arts teachers exist in our society--the model espoused by language arts educators and theorists and the traditional model familiar to the general public from their own schooling.

Language arts education specialists believe that language arts teachers at their most effective create language-rich environments in which the vast complexity of the English language is appreciated and encouraged. These teachers encourage the exploration and examination of many forms of expression. They speak of correctness not as an absolute, but as a function of purpose, situation, and audience. They focus their curricula on the students in their classrooms, providing many and varied opportunities for their students to develop language skills through meaningful communication rather than in staged and static exercises. They celebrate language as a human phenomenon --changing, developing, defining, and in turn being changed, developed, and defined by different cultures and times.

In the specific realm of grammar instruction, certain understandings or attitudes are desirable for language arts teachers to model to their students. They must have an appreciation of the distinction between grammar and usage, though both are within the province of the language arts teacher. The grammar of a language is descriptive, and therefore, the existence of multiple grammars is possible, and even desirable, for a language. Language description can be considered in a metaphor of a landscape. One person seeing the landscape may describe the textures of physical objects in the landscape; another may describe the landscape in terms of light and shadow. Both descriptions may be equally acceptable and "true." The essential point is that both descriptions, no matter how accurate, are merely descriptions and not the landscape itself. They do not limit, encompass, or define the landscape. The landscape will change with time; if the descriptions are to remain true, they also must change. A desire to prevent the landscape from changing or to venerate the description above the reality, is misguided and simply futile.

The metaphor, though suitable for grammar, does not deal with the question of usage. Is it stretching the point to wonder whether the landscape needs wardens to ensure its proper care? Does usage then become the province of the "grammar police," as personified by the language arts teacher? Hopefully not. Yet there is a place for a consideration of usage. The concept of appropriateness of language according to the situation and purpose of the speaker (or writer) is useful, provided that students are given opportunities in school to become sensitive to a variety of situations and purposes, not merely those requiring the use of the standard formal dialect. Students must experience a variety of communicative situations and purposes in school to develop the sensitivity to judge appropriateness and to develop the clarity and effectiveness of their language skills. To return to (and perhaps belabour) the metaphor, perhaps different areas of the landscape are designated for picnics, private walkways, and formal ceremonies. People ought to be aware of and understand why certain activities are acceptable in each area and be allowed (and indeed encouraged) to move freely from one area to another as their needs and purposes change.

Although most language arts educators subscribe to the goal of encouraging language arts teachers who have some of the attitudes, understandings, and qualities discussed above, this goal is controversial, as it is at variance with an older concept of an English teacher, a concept held by many people in society. The traditional model of the English teacher has been the language-arbitrator, the guardian of linguistic standards. The teacher taught formal grammar by the drill-and-exercise method and "enforced" rules of correct speech and writing. Naturally, the teacher could only enforce these rules in the classroom, but students learned that deviations from the rules were incorrect and signs of inferiority regardless of place or occasion. They were expected to internalize this adherence to the rules, and to be, in effect, their own "grammar police." This model of the English teacher placed teachers in the impossible position of restricting and regulating the language of their students, and resulted in the "lego" approach to language instruction: after the students learned the proper name of each grammatical element, or "lego block" in a sentence, the teacher doled out the blocks and expected the students to "build" sentences and paragraphs. It was a model doomed to failure because it so completely reversed the process of communication. Rather than enriching their own language skills, students spent their time labelling someone else's language, divorced from meaning, purpose, and situation.

Language theorists and researchers agree that the model of the language-rich environment that a good teacher can create is far more effective in fostering language growth among our students than the traditional model of drill and exercise. However, despite being discredited in virtually all research on grammar instruction, the drill-and-exercise approach has enjoyed a remarkably long life in the classrooms of our society. Indeed, it has assumed a life of its own. It is the model which we know from our own schooling; it is the model which student teachers use (either by their own choice or someone else's) when they first attempt to teach grammar to their own students. It is, for the most part, the model expected by parents who, although perhaps not richer from having received this instruction themselves, feel that it should be passed along to their children. Ironically, some of the respondents in this study were caught in this same paradox--they disapproved of their own schooling in grammar but were not dissatisfied with their performances when they moved into the role of the traditional grammar teacher.

1. Education of the Public

Student teachers find themselves in the midst of these competing models of the language arts teacher. They are taught one model in their education classes but have experience with the other model. When they enter their own classrooms as professional teachers, they may no longer be subject to the pressures of education specialists, but they will certainly be subject to pressures from the general public and "back to basics" movements which advocate emphasis upon formal, traditional grammar instruction. One clear implication of this conclusion is that language arts educators must speak out to educate the public and the classroom teacher more effectively about an integrated model of grammar instruction. Until and unless teacher educators become energetic and articulate about challenging society's view of grammar instruction, the classroom teacher will continue to face this pressure alone. As the situation stands now, there is a cadre of the "enlightened" who understand the futility of traditional grammar instruction, but this understanding does not extend to the public. Language arts educators, as well as provincial and district consultants, must therefore work harder to educate the public and support the classroom teacher so that those who want to change will have less pressure on them to conform to an allegiance to an ineffective approach. Such forums as home and school meetings and the local newspapers may be used to bring new concepts of grammar and grammar instruction to the attention of the public.

2. Language Arts Education Programs

In consideration of many respondents' insecurity about teaching grammar, their desire to have had more grammar instruction in their own education, and their lack of experience of an integrated writing program model, one clear implication of this study is that the language arts education program has a responsibility to address this double need and desire by providing students with instruction both in grammar and in methodologies of teaching grammar.

Students in the program ought to be made aware, if they are not already, that grammar is descriptive in nature, and that English grammar may be discussed in terms other than those of traditional Latinate terminology. A familiarity with transformational or structural grammar, at least, would be helpful to make this point and hence to make explicit that the terminology of traditional grammar is not the final arbitrator of the English language.

In addition to an understanding of the grammars of English, prospective language arts teachers ought to understand clearly the distinction between what is useful knowledge for them as language arts teachers and what is useful knowledge for their secondary school students. The teaching of literature has suffered because of the many eager literary scholars who have attempted to force-feed a university-level English literature course to their secondary school students. A similar abuse should be prevented in the realm of grammar. Just as our secondary school students should not be expected to become literary scholars, neither should they be expected to become grammarians or specialized linguists.

Two articles discussed in Chapter II provide valuable ideas for an improved language arts education program. Seibert (1975) and Jensen (1974) reported on programs in teacher preparation which attempted to enrich students' knowledge and awareness of the structure of the English language. Seibert reported that English student teachers benefited from studying in one of three grammar-model instruction units. Jensen reported on a "usage fieldwork" requirement for elementary education students. The course encouraged students to adopt an inquiry-based approach to the teaching of language by investigating the English language and stressing the principle of appropriateness in language usage. Both programs provided students with models of teaching other than the traditional grammar instruction model, and by so doing, presumably opened the door to a wider consideration of language usage, study, and instruction.

If an implication of the study is that language arts education students ought to expand their understanding of the English language, then a recommendation might logically follow to institute a mandatory course to ensure that students are exposed to certain concepts. The existing program at the University of Alberta requires that undergraduates earn nine credits in language study and/or composition. After-degree students have no such requirement. At the time of their completion of this questionnaire and their Phase III student teaching, undergraduates may not have (and indeed, some had not) completed this requirement, as undergraduates may complete their student teaching during their third year at university. Therefore, the inadequacy that some undergraduate respondents felt may have been addressed in their final year of university study. This is by no means a certainty, however, as courses in language study and composition vary significantly, and many such courses, while fulfilling the program requirement, do not deal with the nature of English grammar or with grammar instruction.

However, the virtue of requiring course selections from among a variety of language and composition options rather than mandating courses without any options is clear and valuable; students ought to be allowed some flexibility to tailor their educations to suit their interests and needs. Those undergraduates and after-degree students who are confident and competent in their understanding of English grammars ought not to be required to take a redundant course. Those who need additional instruction in grammar may find that their needs can be met by existing courses within the English, Linguistics, and/or Secondary Education Departments. If such courses are available but not mandatory, then program advisers must be exceedingly careful to counsel students individually to help them assess their needs and to guide them to take appropriate courses to broaden their understanding of the English language.

This increased awareness of the grammars of English can be of greater benefit to student teachers if it is developed before they do their practicums and if they are allowed to gain useful experience during their student teaching. If the practicum experience is to work interactively with theoretical instruction, it seems more useful for student teachers to have this knowledge in the practicum situation rather than to do the practicum before learning the necessities of the curricula they will teach. Therefore, a recommendation is that students be required to do their final practicum in their fourth year, when they will have completed most of their academic training and will enter the classroom as academically-prepared as possible. Most language arts education students already follow this procedure, so this recommendation would affect only those few students who prefer to student teach during their third year.

If the university program provides students with some exposure to a nontraditional grammar instruction model, this knowledge ought to be confirmed, explored, and extended in the practicum experience. This recommendation directly contradicts the experience of the respondents of this survey, whose experience was predominantly in teaching grammar by traditional drill and exercise. Its implementation would necessitate a change in the selection of cooperating teachers to include only those individuals who teach grammar in an integrated writing program and who would encourage their student teachers' growth in this area. This recommendation, admittedly, is rather utopian, as cooperating teachers are often in short supply. This difficulty could be overcome by offering inservice and collaborative sessions to encourage cooperating teachers to institute an integrated writing program into their classrooms. The inservice sessions and workshops offered by provincial and district language arts consultants can also help to increase the number of cooperating teachers who teach integrated writing programs.

D. Concluding Thoughts

The respondents in this study were caught in the negative cycle of grammar instruction. As secondary students, they learned grammar by the traditional drill-and-exercise method, which left many of them dissatisfied and uncertain about their knowledge of grammar. As education students, they learned that an integrated approach to grammar and writing is encouraged by education theorists. This approach, however, was not confirmed for those who had the opportunity to teach grammar during their student teaching experiences, where, again, the traditional drill-and-exercise approach was the norm. Although they indicated an intention to teach grammar in an integrated program as professional teachers, the likelihood is that these beginning teachers, like many others before them, will eventually fall back upon the approach which is familiar to them and supported by the general public.

If this cycle of instruction and nonlearning is to be broken, education theorists and language arts consultants will have to become more active in their efforts to promote other approaches to grammar instruction by encouraging the general public and the classroom teacher to support such approaches. Programs in language arts education should include some focus upon instruction in the grammars of English to broaden the awareness of education students about the nature and scope of language study, as well as attention to successful teaching methodologies for language study. Language arts education programs must also provide opportunities for education students to experience and work with successful programs of integrated writing instruction during their student teaching experiences. Teachers will only be able to break out of the "we teach as we were taught" dependence upon traditional grammar study by actively experiencing other models of instruction.

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APPENDIX: THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Grammar Questionnaire for English Ed. CI Students

In an effort to determine the state of grammar instruction in our schools for the next few years, I am studying the attitudes that the current English major Ed. CI students hold toward the learning and teaching of grammar and the experiences underlying these attitudes. Please cooperate by answering the following voluntary questionnaire as thoughtfully as possible. Some of the questions may involve lengthy responses, so feel free to label the reverse side of the page to continue your reply. Although I ask you to put your name on this questionnaire, I guarantee your anonymity in the study itself.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Jill McClay

A. Background information:

Name:____

Age:___________ Sex:_________ Native Language:_______________________

In which province or country did you attend elementary/secondary school? _____________________

Have you attended universities other than the U. of A.?_________ If so, which? _____________________________ Degree _______ Year_____

Approximately how many one-term (or equivalent) university courses have you taken in the following areas:

literature ________________ writing ________________
linguistics/language study _________________

What was your average grade in English courses?______________

Please circle the appropriate number to indicate how much grammar instruction you have received in the following types of courses:

	None (0)	Some (1)	Extensive (2)
Literature	0	1	2
Writing	0	1	2
Linguistics	0	1	2
Ed. C.I.	0	1	2
Foreign language	0	1	2

(Please specify which foreign language(s)___________________

In which U. of A. courses, if any, have you studied grammar?_________

____

B. Definition:

What does the word "grammar" mean to you? What is included in "grammar study?"

C. Reflecting upon yourself as a student and as a writer, please answer the following questions.

1. Please provide an overview of the grammar and writing instruction you received in elementary and secondary school. What do you particularly remember about studying grammar and writing in school?

2. a. How difficult or easy a time did you have learning grammar? Please circle the appropriate number.

1	2	3	4
Very Difficult	Moderately Difficult	Moderately Easy	Very Easy

b. Why was it difficult or easy?

3. How difficult or easy do you think your peers found grammar to learn? Please circle the appropriate number.

1	2	3	4
Very Difficult	Moderately Difficult	Moderately Easy	Very Easy

4. At what grade level(s), if any, should grammar be emphasized?

Primary __________ Junior high __________
Upper elementary __________ Senior high __________

5. Would you like to have received more, less, or the same amount of grammatical instruction in school? ____________
If more or less, at what stage of your schooling? __________________

6. What factors have shaped your attitude toward grammar and writing?

7. In your schooling, how was grammar generally taught? (You may wish to check more than one item.)

_____ During periods of formal grammar instruction
_____ In references to your compositions
_____ In regard to speech
_____ In regard to reading
_____ In a foreign language class. Which language(s)? ___________

8. Of the grammar you learned in elementary/secondary school, how much have you retained?

_____ A great deal, almost all that was taught
_____ A sound basic knowledge
_____ Some practical knowledge, but not much analytic skill
_____ Little or no practical knowledge or analytic skill

9. Are you able to revise and edit your own writing well for grammatical correctness, or do you prefer to have someone else double-check it for you?

10. Is a grammar text or handbook useful to you when you write? If so, which one do you use? For what purposes?

D. Reflecting upon your experience as a student teacher, please respond to the following questions. If you answer no to question 11, please skip down to section E.

11. Did you teach any grammar lessons while student teaching?_______

12. What grammatical concepts did you teach?

13. Did you find these concepts easy or hard to teach? In what ways?

14. Briefly describe how you taught the lessons and how effective they were. Include details of structure (full class, small group, or individual instruction; with text or handouts; using student writing or exercises, etc.) Did this structure help or hinder your teaching? In what ways? (Please continue on the reverse side of the page if necessary.)

E. Considering yourself as a professional teacher in your own classroom, please respond to the following questions.

15. How important is it for students to master each of the following aspects of grammar in their writing before completion of grade 12? Use the following numbers: 1-Essential; 2-Desirable; 3-Not important.

_____ Parts of speech
_____ Agreement of subjects/verbs
_____ Predicate nominatives (nouns)
_____ Coordination/subordination
_____ Writing complete sentences
_____ Parallel structure
_____ Independent/dependent clauses
_____ Linking verbs (copulative)
_____ Possessives
_____ Types of conjunctions
_____ Avoidance of double negatives
_____ Verb tenses

_____ Parts of a sentence
_____ Noun cases (declensions)
_____ Agreement of pronouns/antecedents
_____ Appositives
_____ Correct pronoun usage
_____ Subjunctive mood
_____ Gerund, participle, and infinitive phrases
_____ Dangling modifiers
_____ Avoidance of split infinitives
_____ Active/passive voice
_____ Transitive/intransitive verbs

_____ Others. Please specify: ________________________________

16. How much emphasis do you intend to place upon grammar instruction in the language arts program? Comment if you wish.

_____ High _____ Medium _____ Low

17. How do you intend to teach grammar?

18. (a) How confident do you feel teaching grammar?

1	2	3	4
Highly Insecure	Somewhat Insecure	Somewhat Confident	Highly Confident

(b) Which aspects of grammar, if any, are you especially confident teaching?

(c) Of which, if any, are you insecure?